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THE WORKS
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

IN TEN VOLUMES
VOLUME VI

LITERARY CRITICISM

PORTRAIT FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF A DAGUERREOTYPE

Formerly in the possession of "Stella"

PORTRAIT FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF A DAGUERREOTYPE

Presented to the possession of "Stella"

THE WORKS
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

NEWLY COLLECTED AND EDITED, WITH A MEMOIR, CRITICAL INTRODUCTIONS, AND NOTES, BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN AND GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

LITERARY CRITICISM
I

NEW YORK
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LITERARY CRITICISM. I

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PREFACE

TO THE CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

THE critical and miscellaneous papers of Poe, as editor and contributor, were voluminous, and, in large portions, of only contemporary and ephemeral interest. The labor of selecting from the mass of these writings is, however, simplified by the fact that Poe himself edited it in effect. He was accustomed to eliminate from these papers as he went along, preserving the more original and general reflections, and such special criticism as related to writers of distinction or of contemporary note, and suppressing the detail of the current book and the passing author; and these selected parts he re-wrote and used repeatedly both in lectures and in new reviews. In this way he built up his lectures on "The Poetic Principle" and "The Poets of America;" and it was of such extracts from his criticism of the authors of the country, doubtless, that he intended to make his projected and announced, but never completed, work, "The Authors of America in Prose and Verse." Independently of a few miscellanies, written once for all and

never re-handled, Poe had by this method practically reduced his writings of this sort to four groups: first, the theoretical essays upon poetry and versification; second, notices of authors of established reputation; third, notices of a crowd of minor authors representing the literary character of the times in general; fourth, the paragraphs rescued from the most transitory reviews and gathered by him under the name of "Marginalia." Griswold, when he came to edit, had thus, ready to his hand, a sufficient representation of Poe's entire critical work; and he added, out of the material which Poe had himself neglected, only a few short reviews of the earlier period, and these he included in the "Marginalia." The Editors have added little that Griswold overlooked, and have omitted some passages in the "Marginalia," as is explained in the NOTES. They have omitted also the paper entitled "Pinakidia," which was not original, but consisted of extracts from books read by Poe; and, except in one or two instances which serve for illustration, they have not collected the plate-articles, and other brief miscellanies of a similar nature not upon literary topics. The entire body of this prose has been rearranged, and the text has been collated with the original issues by Poe, and corrected at first hand in respect to the quotations, book-titles, and expressions in foreign languages. The text of "Eureka" is printed from Poe's copy, 1848, much revised by mar-

ginal corrections in his hand; for the use of this volume they desire to express their thanks to William Evarts Benjamin, Esq., who placed it at their disposal. For further details in respect to this portion of Poe's works, the reader is referred to the NOTES at the end of each volume.

THE EDITORS.

NEW YORK, October 1, 1902.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE LITERARY CRITICISM

quality always essentially the same. The tales of ratiocination show almost his only new departure in maturity; three-fourths of the poems, as finally perfected, are developed from his germinal verse. Our serious acceptance of "The Philosophy of Composition" is qualified by distrust of his sincerity when self-disclosure was involved, nor is its reasoning more apparently in earnest than that of the pseudo-scientific tales, which are confessedly plays of fancy. In the very stress laid upon his device of a climax for the end of "The Raven" he works up to the climax of the essay itself, and thereupon, with his knack for dramatic closure, comes to an effective stop. Still, with respect to "The Bells," "Ulalume," and notably "The Raven," it is credible enough that Poe's analytic forecraft, after the first notion of his poem, came deftly into service for its construction; that his *a priori* scheme involved something more than the skill of artists whom practice has taught to avoid false moves and to secure desired effects. The truth lies, no doubt, between two extremes, and, in connection with the professed blazon of his metrical secrets, a curious paragraph in the "Marginalia" is of interest. "It is," he says, "the curse of a certain order of mind that it can never rest satisfied with the consciousness of its ability to do a thing. Not even is it content with doing it. It must both know and show how it was done."

The spirit of his critical writings is that of what he felt himself to be, — an apostle of Taste. Often the desire for beauteous perfection is stronger in melancholiacs than in those with whom faith and hope are watchwords. Heine, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, with their recognition of the eternal unrest, discourse mar-

vellously upon love, music, and poetry, like noble epicures maintaining the pride of individual refinement to the moment of their dissolution. Poe's sense of what is best was irritated by his environment; he was on the alert for offences against beauty and knowledge, and preached upon them with more earnestness than grace. Devoted to his own theories of poetry in the abstract and the concrete, he measurably repeats in "The Philosophy of Composition," and the review of Horne's "Orion," the formula laid down in "The Poetic Principle," — his most succinct essay on the theme. Some mention of this will be required for an Introduction to the Poems; but it may here be said that the argument from his point of view is aptly and attractively set forth, and as clearly as the differing and familiar statements of Wordsworth and Mill. After more than half a century, the world is not far at odds with it. Few will deny that the object of poetry, and of all art, is the elevation of the soul. A larger number than of old will assent to his dictum that "the Rhythmical Creation of Beauty" (using the last word in its comprehensive sense) is the highest poetic means to this result.

"The Rationale of Verse," on the other hand, is a curious discussion of mechanics now well enough understood, and in its main purpose — that of discomfiting the prosodists — wastes laborious pages, when a clearly thought-out sentence would have disposed of the whole matter. What really troubled him was the pedants' failure to see and state what Coleridge demonstrated by the measure of "Christabel," the very poem which Poe cites. He simply might have said that English verse is characteristically accentuate instead of quantitative — the reverse being true of

classical; that, although it is often the more melodious when the more quantitative, its quantity is incidental and derives from the gift of the poet, while stress of accent, so different from syllabic length, determines its metrical system; that in one line of a couplet there may be twice, even thrice, as many syllables as in the other, and yet, if each contains only the given number of accented syllables, they are "equal to each other." Poe certainly felt this, but his statement misses it altogether. As was his wont, when the first glimpse of the idea came to him, he forthwith took the attitude of having always been master of it, and proceeded to argue it out for both himself and the reader — and was tedious and unsuccessful. His sudden notions of classical prosody are for the most part whimsically absurd, though suggestive as respects elisions in scansion. That this essay should have been put forth in such a serious way reveals the crudeness of the time, for it reads as if addressed to a metrical kindergarten. What is good in it he thought out as he wrote, except his strictures upon the weakness of over-dactylic English hexameters, — a defect previously mentioned in his review of Longfellow's ballads. On this ground he has been notably followed by Arnold; but one can rarely draw a better contrast between the faulty and the masterful treatments of a literary topic than by citing "The Rationale of Verse" and the three lectures "On Translating Homer."

In the remainder of this volume, and in the next, under the present arrangement, will be found the more extended notes upon contemporaries, and reviews prepared in Poe's routine of every-day work. Of the former class are the comments on Bryant, Longfellow, Willis, and Lowell, and on Horne and Mrs. Browning;

with the paper on Fancy and Imagination as distinguished in the works of Drake and Moore, — a distinction which seems to one not bred in the rose-gardens of Cashmere as too fine to be worth the drawing. Throughout these the critic's ideas of poetry are consistently repeated. He often points to the element of "the mystic" in works confessedly imaginative, as might be expected from the tenor of his own prose and verse. His critical bearing is scarcely that of good-breeding and conciliation; it exhibits impatience, arrogance, and disdain, and is sometimes as brutal and long-drawn as that of the Scotch reviewers whom he censures. He justly mocks at the puffery and conventionalism of the press of that day. In the paper on Bryant, whom he treated with a certain reverence and whose higher traits he comprehended, he enlarges on the difference between what is gravely said in public and the honest confession made in private talk. One of his grievances was the current upper-class log-rolling, which seemed to him most in evidence within the comfortable down-east circle then gaining repute.

His mature views of poetry and criticism diverged very little from those jauntily set forth in the youthful "Letter to Mr. —— ——," prefixed to the edition of 1831. The best poet, in his opinion, was always the best critic, both of other poets and himself. He antedated the opening chapter of Ruskin's "Modern Painters," asserting that public opinion, wrong at first, is finally made right by the ever-widening judgment of the select few. Poetry must be a passion not a study. Pleasure is its end, not instruction; the latter is only a means toward the former. He fought didacticism, tooth and nail, first and last. To

him its most hateful though betricked forms were the philosophical, as shown in the Lake School, and even more the transcendental — whether foreign-bred or among the Brahmans of Concord. He believed that the latter taint spoiled a good poet, like Emerson, or a great romancer, like Hawthorne, and was odious in minor votaries. The transcendentalists ignored beauty, yet essayed art; they made pictures, music, poetry, from the head; they lacked native grace — and here he makes his distinction between southern and northern race-tendencies; they were of the spirit, but of a spirit disdaining outline. Praising Horne, he rightly deprecates the jargon of the Orphic poet, or "Orphicist." In fine, he wishes that nothing should divert poetry from its pursuit of the beautiful; even passion — and here he quotes Coleridge — is discordant with it: "Locksley Hall" is "a magnificent philippic" aided by rhythm and rhyme, — "Œnone," on the contrary, exalts the soul, not to passion, but into a conception of pure and spiritual beauty far transcending earthly desire. Equally, in his remarks upon "Tortesa" and "The Spanish Student," he declaims against mixing poetry and the drama. "Let a poem be a poem only; let a play be a play and nothing more;" and again, "we are not too sure, indeed, that a 'dramatic poem' is not a flat contradiction in terms."

Much of Poe's outgiving, then, exhibits an honest purpose, a bent toward correct taste, in an unsympathetic time. Baudelaire speaks of infantine America, but things were nearly as bad in England as here, in that day of the "annual" and the "souvenir," the two countries keeping pace as now, — the little folk of one being scarcely a season behind the fashion of the other. Poe looked across the Atlantic, and to the

Continent, with an artist's instinct, while our kinsmen's insularity was still guarded by the British Channel. His criticism was that of a free lance, and couched with a superior air now worn chiefly by our lighter cavalry. Yet he put on record a fine appreciation of the best writers, and turned from pricking their weak points to honest and extravagant delight in their creative powers. In the case of Longfellow, he saw the poet's tact and artistic skill, and was correct, though ill-mannered, in detecting his sympathy with models and his turn for sentiment and moralizing. He strangely failed to see that Longfellow's originality at times was strongest where he borrowed most; that it lay in the tone of his voice, — the individual key to which he set familiar thoughts and traditions. Besides, Longfellow, without claiming it, was just as much as Poe an inbringer of beauty and taste. One may conceive that if the Marylander had lived to old age he would have realized all this, and have regretted the measure of his attacks upon the gentlest of men and minstrels.

The miscellaneous notices are the ordinary work of a newspaper reviewer — neither above nor below the standard of that day in reputable journals. Their writer's hand is evident in the papers on Hawthorne's Tales and Dickens's "Barnaby Rudge." The notices of Headley's "The Sacred Mountains," and (in a later volume) of Lord's and Channing's books of verse, are marked types of the grotesque and merciless flaying which he was well able to inflict. The review of Lord was unfair in its presentment, the new comer having been put forward by a coterie for which Poe had no liking, and having been rash enough to travesty certain passages in the latter's own poems. There remain the series called "The Literati" — sketches

of the literary and personal traits of New York writers grouped by him under that title — and similar notices of various "Minor Contemporaries."

His professional life had brought him into contact with many of those whose characteristics are handed down for us in these papers. He piqued himself upon his discernment, and had a gift for outlining the distinctive features of his subjects with a few strokes. The closing paragraphs of certain sketches are very clever in this wise. Of the same general cast are the notes on "Autography," and some of his discriminations are more than once repeated. In looking over "The Literati," one's first thought is that of surprise that these seemingly ephemeral articles should have been preserved; for "personal" notes are the common gossip of a hundred newspapers, idly read, and of little worth beyond the reading. By exemplifying, however, their interest as a department of journalism, Poe was again a pioneer. In judgment of contemporaries, as far as the chief series is concerned, he evidently meant to be fair and conciliatory, — to err, if at all, on the side of good-nature, — to make friends, rather than enemies, both for himself and for the magazine to which he contributed. But the conceit of the position he assumed, as an exalter and humbler of reputations, doubtless gave him more comfort than the plaudits or the pains of his involuntary sitters. In several of "The Literati" papers, and in not a few of those subjoined, he displays his likes and dislikes conspicuously. He attacked pygmies with a waste of vigor; in fact, it was difficult for him to get through with one of his more serious essays without lowering its dignity by a side-snap, or a passing jeer, at some harmless and sensitive votary of the craft, — for in-

stance, his conjunction of Homer and the poet Street, in "The Rationale of Verse." He was not in the least alive to considerations which lead many to accept the world as they find it, and to maintain a comity with those among whom they work, move, and have their being; yet, with all his will to open the Palace of Truth, he sometimes had cause to wish himself the only spokesman there. Of those for whom he showed most respect were such men as Anthon and Francis, scholars whose age and vocation placed them above distrust. His notices of women are always kind, in one or two cases overweeningly so; that of Mrs. Mowatt, however, displays a charming comprehension. Certainly, women were his unfailing allies and propagandists, and almost the only persons with whom he became intimate by choice. A kind of chivalry, from his childhood, attached to his conception of them; and underlying this a certain prudence withal, as may be inferred from his confession that, "where the gentler sex is concerned, there seems but one course for the critic — speak, if you can commend — be silent, if not; for a woman will never be brought to admit a non-identity between herself and her book." As for the last clause, the woman might well turn upon him with a *de te fabula*.

The pretence that the "Marginalia" are what their prelude and title imply is made transparent by their formal, premeditated style, so different from that of Hawthorne's Note-Books or that of Thoreau's posthumous apothegms and reflections. They afforded the magazinist an easy way of making copy, in those closing years when he felt unequal to a sustained pull. As originally printed, they were largely made up of passages lifted from the earlier essays and

reviews; indeed, a manuscript roll of what seems to be the last number of their series, and to have been unpublished because of the suspension of a magazine, now belongs to the present writer, and consists almost entirely of matter which Poe had already used. Some of his fresher paragraphs are strained and pointless, but others are well worth saving in connection with his work at large. Even in their posing, they show phases of the poet's temperament, just as the sentences written in a "Mental Photograph" album are all the more revelatory for their writer's attempt to get to cover.

The defects of all this literary criticism are those incident to matter which chiefly belonged to hasty and often inconsistent journalism, and which seems not to have been composed with much thought of ultimate preservation. As a journalist, Poe gave rein to his own feelings and hobbies the more unconstrainedly, because what he wrote was merely for the day. He used the superlative almost habitually, and even italicised it. "By these," he says, "if by nothing else, Moore is *immortal*." A poem by Mrs. Lewis is "inexpressibly beautiful." Halleck is "gloriously imaginative," and to something of his there is "no parallel in all American poetry." For what Poe could say in the opposite extreme, there is no lack of instances. A graver fault (illustrated in the Notes to Vol. IV.) was in some degree a part of the general looseness of his time, — the lack of that conscientiousness which, even in hack-writing, ought to render one honest in quotation, making him abhor even the venial alteration of a phrase that it may accord more readily with the flow of his own style.

With all their faults these writings did not so much

lower the tone of criticism as exercise what seems, on the whole, a helpful iconoclasm; they aided, like the writings of Miss Fuller, in whose notice of Longfellow our critic recognized a kindred hand, somewhat to break up unserviceable traditions, by means of their pervading *insouciance* and their treatment on the same plane of both great and small. When he took on a sense of responsibility, he was distinguished from the run of editors by having something to say: usually something technical, in respect to which his instinct was keenly artistic. When his insight has to do with the essence of the thing — with what it is Art's function to express — we are fain to accredit him with the higher critical power, and to believe that it was mainly the circumstance of time and topic which so often precluded him from exercising it.

His discriminations with respect to writers of importance have for the most part been confirmed. Sometimes they were affected by gratitude, as in the cases of Kennedy and Willis, the peculiar status of the latter affording Poe a chance to express his conviction that the mere man of letters could not then hold his own in America, but needed the aid of some factitious social position. But he might as well have said this of Bulwer and Disraeli in England. He was not far out in his estimates of Cooper and Bryant; he saw that Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Lowell were to be among the foremost builders of our imaginative literature, and his rally to the defence of young Bayard Taylor was quick and fine. He ranked Lowell high among our poets, on the score of his imagination, but found his ear for rhythm imperfect. Whittier seemed to him distinctly unimaginative, and as a Southerner and artist he was opposed to the poet-reformer's

themes; but he recognized his "*vivida vis*," his expressional fervor. Poe was among the first to do homage, in an outburst of genuine delight, to the rising genius of Tennyson. His remarks on independence and nationality in our literature, on international copyright, on art *vs.* imitation, are serious and acute. Lastly, he has left us a little gallery of off-hand portraitures, often felicitously done. Nothing, for instance, in the standard "Life" of Margaret Fuller, written by three of her distinguished friends, depicts her better than the few lines in which Poe has set her verily before us.

In the "Marginalia" Poe also conceives of the tragedy which life would be in the case of a man of superhuman genius and knowledge, one "gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect *very* far superior to that of his race." Such a one, he avers, would be looked upon as far below the average of sane intellects, and thus would be in contempt and desolation. The poet's entire career proclaims this note subjective. Doubtless he felt himself, in comparison with those about him, their mental and spiritual superior. If such was his assurance, it behooved him to show the magnanimity of strength confronted with feebleness, of a giant among common men. He had very little of the infinite patience. When the few wise friends, whose counsels he sometimes accepted as given by a right well earned, warned him that in his literary forays as a voluntary censor and satirist he was challenging a host of troubles, he took small heed, though gradually forced by circumstances and his own weakness to be under obligations to men whom he had attacked. Besides, he accepted praise merely as his right, and could neither profit by nor endure

the slightest touch of criticism. A speck of reservation spoiled for him the fullest cup of esteem, even when tendered by the most knightly and authoritative hands. Lowell's "A Fable for Critics," declaring "three-fifths of him genius," gave him an award which ought to content even an unreasonable man. As it was, the good-natured thrusts of one whose scholarship was unassailable, at his metrical and other hobbies, drew from him a somewhat coarse and vindictive review of the whole satire. After all, it was the Massachusetts group of authors whose equipment could not be gainsaid and whose abilities he had most cause to respect — but in the same spirit of impatience, and probably with a genuine persuasion that Southern talent was persistently neglected or kept under, he pitted himself against them. The critic, the judge of letters, like the judge in the tribune, must sit above prejudice, and leave polemics and innuendo to the advocate. Even as an advocate, we have seen that Poe was often merciless to inferiors, and toward his peers maintained an attitude, if not of jealousy, at least of suspicion. "A Reply to Outis," with its contempt for the deference paid him, and his open conjecture that he was repelling an underground attack from a compeer who should be above the measures suspected, is a case in point. That at which he soonest took umbrage was a trick or fault which he detected the more readily from having himself been guilty of it. In cooler moments, however, he was perfectly aware of his own over-sensitiveness; indeed, he philosophized upon it — as when he argued that "A wrong, an injustice, done a poet who is really a poet, excites him to a degree which, to ordinary apprehension, appears disproportionate with the wrong."

In fine, then, the personal sketches and essays, which are herewith collected and arranged as "Literary Criticism," are the relics not so much of a critic as a commentator — usually a polemist when not putting forth, as in "The Poetic Principle," those abstract theories which were in a sense his most religious belief. Whether or not he overrated his own gifts, he certainly despised the public spirit and intelligence, or he would not have weakened his best articles by the excessive use of italics, of the superlative, and of every device that can force a reader to receive an author's idea. Still, he was always a newspaper writer and expositor, and this, of itself, means iteration and reiteration. The gist of his higher argument might be condensed into a few pages. His own reviewers differ widely concerning the final worth of his literary comment, some of them dismissing it as valueless and as having lowered the tone of criticism. The latter portion of this indictment has just been considered. As to the rest, it may be true that, except for a few noteworthy canons, restated again and again, such a body of critical writings, if produced in some other period, would be scarcely worth preserving. But in consideration of the man and his time, — as a part of our literary history, — it has a very decided value. There could be few things farther apart, as respects learning, elevation, ease and quality of style, than the masterly essays of Lowell and these critical sketches; but Lowell is a scholar, wit, and thinker ranging at large, and Poe the bantering monitor of his own generation. Yet the time was one of real importance, covering the initiatory years of our first distinctive literary period, — a period coeval with that of the transatlantic Victorian school. Among Poe's longer

reviews are those of Bryant, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and of Mrs. Browning, Horne, and Dickens. The traits of even the minor writers of such a period have an evolutionary if not an intrinsic significance. Thus the critical writings, however fragmentary and uneven, of a persistent literary journalist, the most nervous and free-spoken of our early reviewers, are important from the scientific point of view. It is well that they have been collected, and their value will increase rather than diminish; for the beginnings of American culture will be reckoned as equal in effect to those of any civilization whatsoever, and of as much import in letters and art as in political economics. One may assert that to the student of our native literature, and to the young American writer who would realize the conditions of the "rude forefathers" of his guild, an acquaintance with the following essays and sketches is little short of indispensable.

E. C. S.

ON POETRY AND THE POETS

ON POETRY AND THE POETS

THE POETIC PRINCIPLE

IN speaking of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing, very much at random, the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which upon my own fancy have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here in the beginning permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, "a long poem," is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all cannot be sustained throughout a composition of

any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags — fails — a revulsion ensues — and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the "Paradise Lost" is to be devoutly admired throughout, with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical, only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its Unity — its totality of effect or impression — we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical prejudgment can force us to admire; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again, omitting the first book (that is to say, commencing with the second), we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned — that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun is a nullity: — and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the "Iliad," we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of Art. The modern epic is of the supposititious ancient model, but an inconsiderate and

blindfold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem *were* popular in reality — which I doubt — it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd — yet we are indebted for it to the Quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere size, abstractly considered — there can be nothing in mere bulk, so far as a volume is concerned — which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, does impress us with a sense of the sublime — but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even "The Columbiad." Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollock by the pound — but what else are we to *infer* from their continual prating about "sustained effort"? If, by "sustained effort," any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort, — if this indeed be a thing commendable, — but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort's account. It is to be hoped that common-sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of Art, rather by the impression it makes — by the effect it produces — than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of "sustained effort" which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite

another; nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By-and-by, this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the mean time, by being generally condemned as falsities they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring, effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring; but, in general, they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public opinion, and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem — in keeping it out of the popular view — is afforded by the following exquisite little serenade: —

"I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright;
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me — who knows how? —
To thy chamber-window, sweet!

"The wandering airs, they faint
On the dark, the silent stream;
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;

The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
Oh, beloved as thou art!

"Oh, lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;
Oh, press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last!"

Very few, perhaps, are familiar with these lines — yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm, yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all; but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern midsummer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis — the very best, in my opinion, which he has ever written — has, no doubt, through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view.

"The shadows lay along Broadway,
'T was near the twilight-tide —
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walked she; but, viewlessly,
Walked spirits at her side.

"Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charmed the air;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair;
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

"She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true, —
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo, —
But honored well are charms to sell
If priests the selling do.

"Now walking there was one more fair —
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail:
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

"No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way! —
But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven
By man is cursed alway!"

In this composition we find it difficult to recognize the Willis who has written so many mere "verses of society." The lines are not only richly ideal, but full of energy, while they breathe an earnestness — an evident sincerity of sentiment — for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania — while the idea that, to merit in poetry, prolixity is indispensable — has for some years past been gradually dying out of the public mind by mere dint of its own absurdity — we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate

object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans, especially, have patronized this happy idea; and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true Poetic dignity and force; but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble, than this very poem — this poem *per se* — this poem which is a poem and nothing more — this poem written solely for the poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would, nevertheless, limit in some measure its modes of inculcation. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe; she has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song, is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreathe her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, unimpassioned. In a word, we must be in that mood, which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. He must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of incul-

cation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle, because it is just this position which in the mind it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme, but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the *offices* of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms: — waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity — her disproportion — her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious — in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus, plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odors, and sentiments, amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colors, and odors, and sentiments, a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a

truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odors, and colors, and sentiments, which greet *him* in common with all mankind — he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry — or when by Music, the most entrancing of the Poetic moods — we find ourselves melted into tears, not as the Abbate Gravia supposes through excess of pleasure, but through a certain petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp now, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness — this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted — has given to the world all that which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and to feel as poetic.

The Poetic Sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes — in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in the Dance — very especially in Music,

— and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the Landscape Garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that Music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected — is so vitally important an adjunct, that he is simply silly who declines its assistance — I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles — the creation of supernal Beauty. It may be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained in fact. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which cannot have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of Poetry with Music in its popular sense we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development. The old Bards and Minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess, and Thomas Moore, singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate, then: — I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. That pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the

contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the soul*, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the Heart. I make Beauty, therefore, — using the word as inclusive of the sublime, — I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes — no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work; but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration than by the citation of the " Proem " to Mr. Longfellow's " Waif ":

" The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

" I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
That my soul cannot resist:

"A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

"Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling
And banish the thoughts of day.

"Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

"For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

"Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

"Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

"Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

"Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

"And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than —

> "the bards sublime,
> Whose distant footsteps echo
> Through the corridors of Time."

The idea of the last quatrain is also very effective. The poem, on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This "ease," or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone — as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so; a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it — to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt — and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of the "North American Review," should be, upon *all* occasions, merely "quiet," must necessarily, upon *many* occasions, be simply silly, or stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy," or "natural," than a Cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the wax-works.

Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June." I quote only a portion of it: —

> "There, through the long, long summer hours,
> The golden light should lie,

And thick, young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale, close beside my cell;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife-bee and humming-bird.

"And what if cheerful shouts, at noon,
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothèd lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

"I know that I no more should see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if, around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom
Should keep them, lingering by my tomb.

"These to their softened hearts should bear
The thought of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
The gladness of the scene;
Whose part, in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
Is — that his grave is green;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his living voice."

The rhythmical flow, here, is even voluptuous — nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The

intense melancholy, which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty. It is, nevertheless,

"A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain."

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the "Health" of Edward C. Pinkney: —

"I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'T is less of earth than heaven.

"Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burdened bee
Forth issue from the rose.

"Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns, —
The idol of past years!

"Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

"I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon —
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name."

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinkney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called the "North American Review." The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It was by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book; whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics; but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be properly *put* to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it requires to be demonstrated as such; and thus, to point out too particularly the merits of a work of Art is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore, is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning: "Come, rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by anything in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of Love — a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate, human hearts than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words: —

"Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still here;
Here still is the smile that no cloud can o'ercast,
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

"Oh! what was love made for, if 't is not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt 's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

"Thou hast called me thy angel in moments of bliss;
And thy angel I 'll be, 'mid the horrors of this,—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee, — or perish there too!"

It has been the fashion, of late days, to deny Moore Imagination, while granting him Fancy — a distinction originating with Coleridge, than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake. Never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language I can call to mind no poem more profoundly, more weirdly *imaginative*, in the best sense, than the lines commencing: "I would I were by that dim lake," which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest — and, speaking of Fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful — of modern poets, was Thomas Hood. His "Fair Ines" had always, for me, an inexpressible charm: —

"O saw ye not fair Ines?
She 's gone into the West,

To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest;
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

"O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivalled bright;
And blessèd will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write!

"Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier
Who rode so gayly by thy side,
And whispered thee so near!
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear?

"I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore;
It would have been a beauteous dream—
If it had been no more!

"Alas, alas, fair Ines!
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you 've loved so long.

"Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before.
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blessed one lover's heart
Has broken many more."

"The Haunted House," by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written; one of the *truest*, one of the most unxeceptionable, one of the most thoroughly artistic both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal, imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the universally appreciated "Bridge of Sighs."

"One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

"Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

"Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.

"Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her, —

All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

"Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

"Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family —
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily,

"Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

"Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

"Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

"Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed;
Love, by harsh evidence
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

"Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

"The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver,
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled —
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

"In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran, —
Over the brink of it,
Picture it — think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

"Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

"Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently — kindly —
Smoothe and compose them:
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

"Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring

Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

"Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest. —
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

"Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!"

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron, is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves: —

"Though the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

"Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,

If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

"Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is delivered
To pain — it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me;
They may crush, but they shall not contemn;
They may torture, but shall not subdue me;
'T is of *thee* that I think — not of them.

"Though human, thou didst not deceive me;
Though woman, thou didst not forsake;
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me;
Though slandered, thou never couldst shake;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me;
Though parted, it was not to fly;
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me;
Nor mute, that the world might belie.

"Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one —
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun;
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

"From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
Thus much I at least may recall:
It hath taught me that what I most cherished
Deserved to be dearest of all.
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*."

Although the rhythm here is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It

is the soul-elevating idea, that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman.

From Alfred Tennyson — although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived — I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him, and *think* him, the noblest of poets, *not* because the impressions he produces are, at *all* times, the most profound, *not* because the poetical excitement which he induces is, at *all* times, the most intense, but because it *is*, at all times, the most ethereal, — in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, "The Princess": —

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
That brings our friends up from the underworld;
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!"

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavored to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is, strictly and simply, the Human Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the Soul*, quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart, or of that Truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason. For, in regard to Passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade rather than elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary — Love, the true, the divine Eros, the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus — is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth — if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect; but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia, which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven, in the volutes of the flower, in the clustering of low shrubberies, in the waving of the grain-fields, in the slanting of the tall, Eastern trees, in the blue distance of mountains, in the grouping of clouds, in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks, in the gleaming of silver rivers, in the repose of sequestered lakes, in the star-mirroring depths

of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds, in the harp of Æolus, in the sighing of the night-wind, in the repining voice of the forest, in the surf that complains to the shore, in the fresh breath of the woods, in the scent of the violet, in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth, in the suggestive odor that comes to him at eventide from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts, in all unworldly motives, in all holy impulses, in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman, in the grace of her step, in the lustre of her eye, in the melody of her voice, in her soft laughter, in her sigh, in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments, in her burning enthusiasms, in her gentle charities, in her meek and devotional endurances; but above all — ah! far above all — he kneels to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her *love*.

Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem — one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called "The Song of the Cavalier." With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus to appreciate the real excellence, of the poem. To do this fully, we must identify ourselves, in fancy, with the soul of the old cavalier.

"Then mounte! then mounte, brave gallants, all,
And don your helmes amaine:
Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honor, call
Us to the field againe.

No shrewish teares shall fill our eye
  When the sword-hilt 's in our hand;
Heart-whole we 'll part and no whit sighe
  For the fayrest of the land;
Let piping swaine, and craven wight,
  Thus weepe and puling crye,
Our business is like men to fight,
  And hero-like to die! "

THE

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says — "By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin — and indeed what he himself acknowledges is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens's idea; but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis, or one is suggested by an incident of the day, or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combina-

tion of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative, designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or authorial comment whatever crevices of fact or action may from page to page render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view — for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest — I say to myself, in the first place, — "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone — whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone — afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would — that is to say, who could — detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say; but, perhaps, the authorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers — poets in especial — prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy — an ecstatic intuition; and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of

thought, at the true purposes seized only at the last moment, at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view, at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable, at the cautious selections and rejections, at the painful erasures and interpolations — in a word, at the wheels and pinions, the tackle for scene-shifting, the step-ladders and demon-traps, the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred constitute the properties of the literary *histrio.*

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven" as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition; that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem *per se*, the

circumstance — or say the necessity — which in the first place gave rise to the intention of composing *a* poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression; for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *anything* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones — that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose — a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions — the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art — the limit of a single sitting; and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe" (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be

overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit — in other words, to the excitement or elevation — again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect: — this, with one proviso — that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular while not below the critical taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem — a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which with the poetical stands not in the slightest need of demonstration — the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect; they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul* — *not* of intellect, or of heart —

upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes — that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment — no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object, Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable to a certain extent in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me), which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from anything here said that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem — for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast; but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation; and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem — some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects — or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense — I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone — both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity — of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation *of the application* of the *refrain* — the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be

the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary: the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt; and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next desideratum was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "Nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by *a human* being; I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven as equally capable of speech,

and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven — the bird of ill-omen — monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself — "Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death — was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer here also is obvious — "When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty;* the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world — and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such a topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore." I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying at every turn the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending — that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application*. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover — the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore" — that I could make this first query a commonplace one, the second less so, the

third still less, and so on, until at length the lover, startled from his original nonchalance by the melancholy character of the word itself, by its frequent repetition and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it, is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character — queries whose solution he has passionately at heart — propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture — propounds them, not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the *expected* "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me — or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction — I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query — that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer — that query in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning — at the end, where all works of art should begin; for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:—

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil — prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first, that by establishing the climax I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover, and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza, as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite — and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing.* The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and, although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic, the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically — the feet employed

throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short; the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet, the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds), the third of eight, the fourth of seven and a half, the fifth the same, the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has is in their *combination into stanza;* nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven; and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale.* For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields; but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident: — it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber — in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished — this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird, and the thought of introducing him through the window was inevitable. The idea of

making the lover suppose in the first instance that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage — it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird; the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic, approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible, is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

Not the *least obeisance made he;* not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out: —

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the *grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,* —

"Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven*, thou," I said, "art sure
no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly
shore:
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness: — this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests — no longer sees anything even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader — to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*, which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper — with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world — the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable, of the real. A

raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore" and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight through the violence of a storm to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams — the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore" — a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required: first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of sugges-

tiveness, some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning — it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under current of the theme — which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem — their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines —

"Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical — but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen: —

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor:
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted — nevermore.

THE RATIONALE OF VERSE

THE word "Verse" is here used, not in its strict or primitive sense, but as the term most convenient for expressing generally and without pedantry all that is involved in the consideration of rhythm, rhyme, metre, and versification.

There is, perhaps, no topic in polite literature which has been more pertinaciously discussed, and there is certainly not one about which so much inaccuracy, confusion, misconception, misrepresentation, mystification, and downright ignorance on all sides, can be fairly said to exist. Were the topic really difficult, or did it lie, even, in the cloud-land of metaphysics, where the doubt-vapors may be made to assume any and every shape at the will or at the fancy of the gazer, we should have less reason to wonder at all this contradiction and perplexity; but in fact the subject is exceedingly simple; one tenth of it, possibly, may be called ethical; nine tenths, however, appertain to the mathematics; and the whole is included within the limits of the commonest common-sense.

"But, if this is the case, how," it will be asked, "can so much misunderstanding have arisen? Is it conceivable that a thousand profound scholars, investigating so very simple a matter for centuries, have not been able to place it in the fullest light, at least,

of which it is susceptible?" These queries, I confess, are not easily answered; at all events, a satisfactory reply to them might cost more trouble than would, if properly considered, the whole *vexata quæstio* to which they have reference. Nevertheless, there is little difficulty or danger in suggesting that the "thousand profound scholars" *may* have failed, first, because they were scholars; secondly, because they were profound; and thirdly, because they were a thousand — the impotency of the scholarship and profundity having been thus multiplied a thousandfold. I am serious in these suggestions; for, first again, there is something in "scholarship" which seduces us into blind worship of Bacon's Idol of the Theatre — into irrational deference to antiquity; secondly, the proper "profundity" is rarely profound — it is the nature of Truth in general, as of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial; thirdly, the clearest subject may be overclouded by mere superabundance of talk. In chemistry, the best way of separating two bodies is to add a third; in speculation, fact often agrees with fact, and argument with argument, until an additional well-meaning fact or argument sets everything by the ears. In one case out of a hundred, a point is excessively discussed because it is obscure; in the ninety-nine remaining, it is obscure because excessively discussed. When a topic is thus circumstanced, the readiest mode of investigating it is to forget that any previous investigation has been attempted.

But, in fact, while much has been written on the Greek and Latin rhythms, and even on the Hebrew, little effort has been made at examining that of any of the modern tongues. As regards the English,

comparatively nothing has been done. It may be said, indeed, that we are without a treatise on our own verse. In our ordinary grammars and in our works on rhetoric or prosody in general may be found occasional chapters, it is true, which have the heading, "Versification," but these are in all instances exceedingly meagre. They pretend to no analysis; they propose nothing like system; they make no attempt at even rule; everything depends upon "authority." They are confined, in fact, to mere exemplification of the supposed varieties of English feet and English lines; — although in no work with which I am acquainted are these feet correctly given or these lines detailed in anything like their full extent. Yet what has been mentioned is all — if we accept the occasional introduction of some pedagogism, such as this, borrowed from the Greek Prosodies: "When a syllable is wanting, the verse is said to be catalectic; when the measure is exact, the line is acatalectic; when there is a redundant syllable, it forms hypermeter." Now whether a line be termed catalectic or acatalectic is, perhaps, a point of no vital importance; it is even possible that the student may be able to decide promptly when the *a* should be employed and when omitted, yet be incognizant at the same time of *all* that is worth knowing in regard to the structure of verse.

A leading defect in each of our treatises (if treatises they can be called) is the confining the subject to mere *Versification*, while *Verse* in general, with the understanding given to the term in the heading of this paper, is the real question at issue. Nor am I aware of even one of our Grammars which so much as properly defines the word "versification" itself.

"Versification," says a work now before me, of which the accuracy is far more than usual — the "English Grammar" of Goold Brown — "Versification is the art of arranging words into lines of correspondent length, so as to produce harmony by the regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity." The commencement of this definition might apply, indeed, to the *art* of versification, but not versification itself. Versification is not the art of arranging, etc., but the actual arranging — a distinction too obvious to need comment. The error here is identical with one which has been too long permitted to disgrace the initial page of every one of our school grammars. I allude to the definitions of English Grammar itself. "English Grammar," it is said, "is the art of speaking and writing the English language correctly." This phraseology, or something essentially similar, is employed, I believe, by Bacon, Miller, Fisk, Greenleaf, Ingersoll, Kirkland, Cooper, Flint, Pue, Comly, and many others. These gentlemen, it is presumed, adopted it without examination from Murray, who derived it from Lily (whose work was "*quam solam Regia Majestas in omnibus scholis docendam præcipit*"), and who appropriated it without acknowledgment, but with some unimportant modification, from the Latin Grammar of Leonicenus. It may be shown, however, that this definition, so complacently received, is not, and cannot be, a proper definition of English Grammar. A definition is that which so describes its object as to distinguish it from all others; it is no definition of any one thing if its terms are applicable to any one other. But if it be asked — "What is the design, the end, the aim of English Grammar?" our obvious answer is, "The art of speaking and writing

the English language correctly: " — that is to say, we must use the precise words employed as the definition of English Grammar itself. But the object to be obtained by any means is, assuredly, not the means. English Grammar and the end contemplated by English Grammar, are two matters sufficiently distinct; nor can the one be more reasonably regarded as the other than a fishing-hook as a fish. The definition, therefore, which is applicable in the latter instance, *cannot*, in the former, be true. Grammar in general is the analysis of language; English Grammar of the English.

But to return to Versification as defined in our extract above. "It is the art," says the extract, "of arranging words into lines *of correspondent length*." Not so: a correspondence in the length of lines is by no means essential. Pindaric odes are, surely, instances of versification, yet these compositions are noted for extreme diversity in the length of their lines.

The arrangement is moreover said to be for the purpose of producing "*harmony* by the regular alternation," etc. But *harmony* is not the sole aim — not even the principal one. In the construction of verse, *melody* should never be left out of view; yet this is a point which all our Prosodies have most unaccountably forborne to touch. Reasoned rules on this topic should form a portion of all systems of rhythm.

"So as to produce harmony," says the definition, "by the *regular alternation*," etc. A *regular* alternation, as described, forms no part of any principle of versification. The arrangement of spondees and dactyls, for example, in the Greek hexameter is an

arrangement which may be termed *at random*. At least, it is arbitrary. Without interference with the line as a whole, a dactyl may be substituted for a spondee, or the converse, at any point other than the ultimate and penultimate feet, of which the former is always a spondee, the latter nearly always a dactyl. Here, it is clear, we have no "*regular* alternation of syllables differing in quantity."

"So as to produce harmony," proceeds the definition, "by the regular alternation of *syllables differing in quantity*" — in other words, by the alternation of long and short syllables; for in rhythm all syllables are necessarily either short or long. But not only do I deny the necessity of any *regularity* in the succession of feet and, by consequence, of syllables, but dispute the essentiality of any *alternation*, regular or irregular, of syllables long and short. Our author, observe, is now engaged in a definition of versification in general, not of English versification in particular. But the Greek and Latin metres abound in the spondee and pyrrhic — the former consisting of two long syllables, the latter of two short; and there are innumerable instances of the immediate succession of many spondees and many pyrrhics.

Here is a passage from Silius Italicus: —

> "Fallit te, mensas inter quod credis inermem.
> Tot bellis quæsita viro, tot cædibus armat
> Majestas æterna ducem: si admoveris ora,
> Cannas, et Trebiam ante oculos, Trasymenaque busta,
> Et Pauli stare ingentem miraberis umbram."

Making the elisions demanded by the classic Prosodies, we should scan these hexameters thus: —

> Fāllīt | tē mēn | sās īn | tēr qūod | crēdĭs ĭn | ērmēm |
> Tōt bēl | līs quæ | sītă vĭ | rō tōt | cædĭbŭs | ārmāt |

Mājēs | tās ǣ | tērnă dŭ | cēm s'ād | mōvĕrĭs | ōrā |
Cānnās | ēt Trĕbĭ' | ānt'ŏcŭ | lōs Trăsy | mēnăqŭe | būstā
Ēt Pāu | lī stā | r'īngēn | tēm mī | rābĕrĭs | ūmbrām |

It will be seen that, in the first and last of these lines, we have only two short syllables in thirteen, with an uninterrupted succession of no less than *nine* long syllables. But how are we to reconcile all this with a definition of versification which describes it as "the art of arranging words into lines of correspondent length so as to produce harmony by the *regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity*"?

It may be urged, however, that our prosodist's *intention* was to speak of the English metres alone, and that, by omitting all mention of the spondee and pyrrhic, he has virtually avowed their exclusion from our rhythms. A grammarian is never excusable on the ground of good intentions. We demand from him, if from any one, rigorous precision of style. But grant the design. Let us admit that our author, following the example of all authors on English Prosody, has, in defining versification at large, intended a definition merely of the English. All these prosodists, we will say, reject the spondee and pyrrhic. Still all admit the iambus, which consists of a short syllable followed by a long; the trochee, which is the converse of the iambus; the dactyl, formed of one long syllable followed by two short; and the anapæst, two short succeeded by a long. The spondee is improperly rejected, as I shall presently show. The pyrrhic is rightfully dismissed. Its existence in either ancient or modern rhythm is purely chimerical, and the insisting on so perplexing a nonentity as a foot of *two short* syllables affords, perhaps, the best evidence of the gross irrationality and subservience to authority

which characterize our Prosody. In the mean time the acknowledged dactyl and anapæst are enough to sustain my proposition about the "alternation," etc., without reference to feet which are assumed to exist in the Greek and Latin metres alone: for an anapæst and a dactyl may meet in the same line, when of course we shall have an uninterrupted succession of four short syllables. The meeting of these two feet, to be sure, is an accident not contemplated in the definition now discussed; for this definition, in demanding a "regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity," insists on a regular succession of similar *feet*. But here is an example: —

Sīng tŏ mĕ | Ĭsăbēlle.

This is the opening line of a little ballad now before me, which proceeds in the same rhythm — a peculiarly beautiful one. More than all this: — English lines are often well composed, entirely, of a regular succession of syllables *all of the same quantity*, — the first lines, for instance, of the following quatrain by Arthur C. Coxe: —

"*March! march! march!*
Making sounds as they tread, —
Ho! ho! how they step,
Going down to the dead!"

The line italicised is formed of three cæsuras. The cæsura, of which I have much to say hereafter, is rejected by the English Prosodies and grossly misrepresented in the classic. It is a perfect foot — the most important in all verse — and consists of a single *long* syllable; *but the length of this syllable varies*.

It has thus been made evident that there is *not one* point of the definition in question which does not

involve an error. And for anything more satisfactory or more intelligible we shall look in vain to any published treatise on the topic.

So general and so total a failure can be referred only to radical misconception. In fact the English Prosodists have blindly followed the pedants. These latter, like *les moutons de Panurge*, have been occupied in incessant tumbling into ditches, for the excellent reason that their leaders have so tumbled before. The "Iliad," being taken as a starting-point, was made to stand instead of nature and common-sense. Upon this poem, in place of facts and deduction from fact or from natural law, were built systems of feet, metres, rhythms, rules, — rules that contradict each other every five minutes, and for nearly all of which there may be found twice as many exceptions as examples. If any one has a fancy to be thoroughly confounded — to see how far the infatuation of what is termed "classical scholarship" can lead a bookworm in the manufacture of darkness out of sunshine — let him turn over, for a few moments, any of the German Greek Prosodies. The only thing clearly made out in them is a very magnificent contempt for Leibnitz's principle of "a sufficient reason."

To divert attention from the real matter in hand by any farther reference to these works is unnecessary, and would be weak. I cannot call to mind, at this moment, one essential particular of information that is to be gleaned from them; and I will drop them here with merely this one observation: that, employing from among the numerous "*ancient*" feet the spondee, the trochee, the iambus, the anapæst, the dactyl, and the cæsura alone, I will engage to scan *correctly* any of the Horatian rhythms, or any true rhythm that

human ingenuity can conceive. And this excess of chimerical feet is, perhaps, the very least of the scholastic supererogations. *Ex uno disce omnia.* The fact is that *Quantity* is a point in whose investigation the lumber of mere learning may be dispensed with, if ever in any. Its appreciation is universal. It appertains to no region, nor race, nor era in especial. To melody and to harmony the Greeks hearkened with ears precisely similar to those which we employ for similar purposes at present; and I should not be condemned for heresy in asserting that a pendulum at Athens would have vibrated much after the same fashion as does a pendulum in the city of Penn.

Verse originates in the human enjoyment of equality, fitness. To this enjoyment, also, all the moods of verse — rhythm, metre, stanza, rhyme, alliteration, the *refrain*, and other analogous effects — are to be referred. As there are some readers who habitually confound rhythm and metre, it may be as well here to say that the former concerns the *character* of feet (that is, the arrangements of syllables), while the latter has to do with the *number* of these feet. Thus by "a dactylic *rhythm*" we express a sequence of dactyls. By "a dactylic hexa*meter*" we imply a line or measure consisting of six of these dactyls.

To return to *equality*. Its idea embraces those of similarity, proportion, identity, repetition, and adaptation or fitness. It might not be very difficult to go even behind the idea of equality, and show both how and why it is that the human nature takes pleasure in it; but such an investigation would, for any purpose now in view, be supererogatory. It is sufficient that the *fact* is undeniable — the fact that man derives enjoyment from his perception of equality. Let us

examine a crystal. We are at once interested by the equality between the sides and between the angles of one of its faces: the equality of the sides pleases us; that of the angles doubles the pleasure. On bringing to view a second face in all respects similar to the first, this pleasure seems to be squared; on bringing to view a third it appears to be cubed, and so on. I have no doubt, indeed, that the delight experienced, if measurable, would be found to have exact mathematical relations such as I suggest; that is to say, as far as a certain point, beyond which there would be a decrease in similar relations.

The perception of pleasure in the equality of *sounds* is the principle of *Music*. Unpractised ears can appreciate only simple equalities, such as are found in ballad airs. While comparing one simple sound with another they are too much occupied to be capable of comparing the equality subsisting between these two simple sounds, taken conjointly, and two other similar simple sounds taken conjointly. Practised ears, on the other hand, appreciate both equalities at the same instant — although it is absurd to suppose that both are *heard* at the same instant. One is heard and appreciated from itself: the other is heard by the memory; and the instant glides into and is confounded with the secondary appreciation. Highly cultivated musical taste in this manner enjoys not only these double equalities, all appreciated at once, but takes pleasurable cognizance, through memory, of equalities the members of which occur at intervals so great that the uncultivated taste loses them altogether. That this latter can properly estimate or decide on the merits of what is called scientific music is of course impossible. But scientific music has no claim to in-

trinsic excellence; it is fit for scientific ears alone. In its excess it is the triumph of the *physique* over the *morale* of music. The sentiment is overwhelmed by the sense. On the whole, the advocates of the simpler melody and harmony have infinitely the best of the argument; — although there has been very little of real argument on the subject.

In *verse*, which cannot be better designated than as an inferior or less capable Music, there is, happily, little chance for complexity. Its rigidly simple character not even Science, not even Pedantry, can greatly pervert.

The rudiment of verse may, possibly, be found in the *spondee*. The very germ of a thought, seeking satisfaction in equality of sound, would result in the construction of words of two syllables equally accented. In corroboration of this idea we find that spondees most abound in the most ancient tongues. The second step we can easily suppose to be the comparison, that is to say, the collocation, of two spondees — of two words composed each of a spondee. The third step would be the juxtaposition of three of these words. By this time the perception of monotone would induce farther consideration; and thus arises what Leigh Hunt so flounders in discussing under the title of "The *Principle* of Variety in Uniformity." Of course there is no principle in the case, nor in maintaining it. The "Uniformity" is the principle. The "Variety" is but the principle's natural safeguard from self-destruction by excess of self. "Uniformity," besides, is the very worst word that could have been chosen for the expression of the *general* idea at which it aims.

The perception of monotone having given rise to

an attempt at its relief, the first thought in this new direction would be that of collating two or more words formed each of two syllables differently accented (that is to say, short and long) but having the same order in each word: — in other terms, of collating two or more iambuses, or two or more trochees. And here let me pause to assert that more pitiable nonsense has been written on the topic of *long* and *short* syllables than on any other subject under the sun. In general, a syllable is long or short, just as it is difficult or easy of enunciation. The *natural* long syllables are those encumbered — the *natural* short syllables are those *un*encumbered — with consonants; all the rest is mere artificiality and jargon. The Latin Prosodies have a rule that "a vowel before two consonants is long." This rule is deduced from "authority" — that is, from the observation that vowels so circumstanced, in the ancient poems, are always in syllables long by the laws of scansion. The philosophy of the rule is untouched, and lies simply in the physical difficulty of giving voice to such syllables, of performing the lingual evolutions necessary for their utterance. Of course, it is not the *vowel* that is long (although the rule says so), but the syllable of which the vowel is a part. It will be seen that the length of a syllable, depending on the facility or difficulty of its enunciation, must have great variation in various syllables; but for the purposes of verse we suppose a long syllable equal to two short ones; and the natural deviation from this relativeness we correct in perusal. The more closely our long syllables approach this relation with our short ones, the better, *ceteris paribus*, will be our verse; but if the relation does not exist of itself, we force it by emphasis, which

can, of course, make any syllable as long as desired; or, by an effort, we can pronounce with unnatural brevity a syllable that is naturally too long. *Accented* syllables are of course always long, but, where *un*encumbered with consonants, must be classed among the *unnaturally* long. Mere custom has declared that we shall accent them — that is to say, dwell upon them; but no inevitable lingual difficulty forces us to do so. In fine, every long syllable must of its own accord occupy in its utterance, or must be *made* to occupy, precisely the time demanded for two short ones. The only exception to this rule is found in the cæsura — of which more anon.

The success of the experiment with the trochees or iambuses (the one would have suggested the other) must have led to a trial of dactyls or anapæsts — natural dactyls or anapæsts — dactylic or anapæstic *words*. And now some degree of complexity has been attained. There is an appreciation, first, of the equality between the several dactyls, or anapæsts, and, secondly, of that between the long syllable and the two short conjointly. But here it may be said that step after step would have been taken, in continuation of this routine, until all the feet of the Greek Prosodies became exhausted. Not so: — these remaining feet have no existence except in the brains of the scholiasts. It is needless to imagine men inventing these things, and folly to explain how and why they invented them, until it shall be first shown that they are actually invented. All other "feet" than those which I have specified are, if not impossible at first view, merely combinations of the specified; and, although this assertion is rigidly true, I will, to avoid misunderstanding, put it in a somewhat

different shape. I will say, then, that at present I am aware of no *rhythm* — nor do I believe that any one can be constructed — which, in its last analysis, will not be found to consist altogether of the feet I have mentioned, either existing in their individual and obvious condition, or interwoven with each other in accordance with simple natural laws which I will endeavor to point out hereafter.

We have now gone so far as to suppose men constructing indefinite sequences of spondaic, iambic, trochaic, dactylic, or anapæstic words. In *extending* these sequences, they would be again arrested by the sense of monotone. A succession of spondees would *immediately* have displeased; one of iambuses or of trochees, on account of the variety included within the foot itself, would have taken longer to displease; one of dactyls or anapæsts, still longer; but even the last, if extended very far, must have become wearisome. The idea, first, of curtailing, and, secondly, of defining the length of a sequence, would thus at once have arisen. Here then is the *line*, or verse proper.[1] The principle of equality being constantly at the bottom of the whole process, lines would naturally be made, in the first instance, equal in the number of their feet; in the second instance, there would be variation in the mere number; one line would be twice as long as another; then one would be some less obvious multiple of another; then still less obvious proportions would be adopted: —

[1] Verse, from the Latin *vertere*, to turn, is so called on account of the turning or recommencement of the series of feet. Thus a verse, strictly speaking, is a line. In this sense, however, I have preferred using the latter word alone; employing the former in the general acceptation given it in the heading of this paper.

nevertheless there would be *proportion*, that is to say, a phase of equality, still.

Lines being once introduced, the necessity of distinctly defining these lines *to the ear* (as yet written verse does not exist) would lead to a scrutiny of their capabilities *at their terminations;* and now would spring up the idea of equality in sound between the final syllables — in other words, of *rhyme.* First, it would be used only in the iambic, anapæstic, and spondaic rhythms (granting that the latter had not been thrown aside, long since, on account of its tameness); because in these rhythms the concluding syllable being long could best sustain the necessary protraction of the voice. No great while could elapse, however, before the effect, found pleasant as well as useful, would be applied to the two remaining rhythms. But as the chief force of rhyme must lie in the accented syllable, the attempt to create rhyme at all in these two remaining rhythms, the trochaic and dactylic, would necessarily result in double and triple rhymes, such as *beauty* with *duty* (trochaic) and *beautiful* with *dutiful* (dactylic).

It must be observed that, in suggesting these processes, I assign them no date; nor do I even insist upon their order. Rhyme is supposed to be of modern origin, and were this proved, my positions remain untouched. I may say, however, in passing, that several instances of rhyme occur in the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, and that the Roman poets occasionally employ it. There is an effective species of ancient rhyming which has never descended to the moderns: that in which the ultimate and penultimate syllables rhyme with each other. For example: —

"Parturiunt montes et nascitur ridicu*lus mus.*"

And again: —

"Litoreis ingens inventa sub ilici*bus sus*."

The terminations of Hebrew verse (as far as understood) show no signs of rhyme; but what thinking person can doubt that it did actually exist? That men have so obstinately and blindly insisted, in general, even up to the present day, in confining rhyme to the ends of lines, when its effect is even better applicable elsewhere, intimates, in my opinion, the sense of some *necessity* in the connection of the end with the rhyme — hints that the origin of rhyme lay in a necessity which connected it with the end — shows that neither mere accident nor mere fancy gave rise to the connection — points, in a word, at the very necessity which I have suggested (that of some mode of defining lines *to the ear*) as the true origin of rhyme. Admit this, and we throw the origin far back in the night of Time — beyond the origin of written verse.

But, to resume. The amount of complexity I have now supposed to be attained is very considerable. Various systems of equalization are appreciated at once (or nearly so) in their respective values and in the value of each system with reference to all the others. As our present *ultimatum* of complexity, we have arrived at triple-rhymed, natural-dactylic lines, existing proportionally as well as equally with regard to other triple-rhymed, natural-dactylic lines. For example: —

Virginal Lilian, rigidly, humblily dutiful;
Saintlily, lowlily,
Thrillingly, holily
Beautiful!

Here we appreciate, first, the absolute equality between the long syllable of each dactyl and the two

short conjointly; secondly, the absolute equality between each dactyl and any other dactyl — in other words, among all the dactyls; thirdly, the absolute equality between the two middle lines; fourthly, the absolute equality between the first line and the three others taken conjointly; fifthly, the absolute equality between the last two syllables of the respective words "dutiful" and "beautiful;" sixthly, the absolute equality between the two last syllables of the respective words "lowlily" and "holily;" seventhly, the proximate equality between the first syllable of "dutiful" and the first syllable of "beautiful;" eighthly, the proximate equality between the first syllable of "lowlily" and that of "holily;" ninthly, the proportional equality (that of five to one) between the first line and each of its members, the dactyls; tenthly, the proportional equality (that of two to one) between each of the middle lines and its members, the dactyls; eleventhly, the proportional equality between the first line and each of the two middle — that of five to two; twelfthly, the proportional equality between the first line and the last — that of five to one; thirteenthly, the proportional equality between each of the middle lines and the last — that of two to one; lastly, the proportional equality, as concerns number, between all the lines, taken collectively and any individual line — that of four to one.

The consideration of this last equality would give birth immediately to the idea of *stanza*[1] — that is to say, the insulation of lines into equal or obviously proportional masses. In its primitive (which was also its best) form, the stanza would most probably have

[1] A stanza is often vulgarly, and with gross impropriety, called a *verse*.

had absolute unity. In other words, the removal of any one of its lines would have rendered it imperfect; as in the case above, where, if the last line, for example, be taken away, there is left no rhyme to the "dutiful" of the first. Modern stanza is excessively loose — and where so, ineffective, as a matter of course.

Now, although in the deliberate written statement which I have here given of these various systems of equalities, there seems to be an infinity of complexity — so much that it is hard to conceive the mind taking cognizance of them all in the brief period occupied by the perusal or recital of the stanza — yet the difficulty is in fact apparent only when we will it to become so. Any one fond of mental experiment may satisfy himself, by trial, that, in listening to the lines, he does actually (although with a seeming unconsciousness, on account of the rapid evolutions of sensation) recognize and instantaneously appreciate (more or less intensely as his ear is cultivated) each and all of the equalizations detailed. The pleasure received, or receivable, has very much such progressive increase, and in very nearly such mathematical relations, as those which I have suggested in the case of the crystal.

It will be observed that I speak of merely a proximate equality between the first syllable of "dutiful" and that of "beautiful;" and it may be asked why we cannot imagine the earliest rhymes to have had absolute instead of proximate equality of sound. But absolute equality would have involved the use of identical words; and it is the duplicate sameness or monotony — that of sense as well as that of sound — which would have caused these rhymes to be rejected in the very first instance.

The narrowness of the limits within which verse composed of natural feet alone must necessarily have been confined, would have led, after a *very* brief interval, to the trial and immediate adoption of artificial feet — that is to say, of feet *not* constituted each of a single word, but two or even three words, or of parts of words. These feet would be intermingled with natural ones. For example: —

Ă brēath | căn māke | thĕm ās | ă breāth | hăs māde.

This is an iambic line in which each iambus is formed of two words. Again: —

Thĕ ūn | ĭmā | gĭnā | blĕ mīght | ŏf Jōve.

This is an iambic line in which the first foot is formed of a word and a part of a word; the second and third, of parts taken from the body or interior of a word; the fourth, of a part and a whole; the fifth, of two complete words. There are no *natural* feet in either line. Again: —

Cān ĭt bĕ | fānciĕd thăt | Dēĭtў | ēvĕr vĭn | dīctĭvelў
Māde ĭn hĭs | īmăge ă | mānnĭkĭn | mērelў tŏ | mādděn ĭt?

These are two dactylic lines in which we find natural feet ("Deity," "mannikin"), feet composed of two words ("fancied that," "image a," "merely to," "madden it"), feet composed of three words ("can it be," "made in his"), a foot composed of a part of a word ("dictively"), and a foot composed of a word and a part of a word ("ever vin").

And now, in our supposititious progress, we have gone so far as to exhaust all the *essentialities* of verse. What follows may, strictly speaking, be regarded as embellishment merely; but even in this

embellishment, the rudimental sense of *equality* would have been the never-ceasing impulse. It would. for example, be simply in seeking farther administration to this sense that men would come, in time, to think of the *refrain*, or burden, where, at the closes of the several stanzas of a poem, one word or phrase is *repeated;* and of alliteration, in whose simplest form a consonant is *repeated* in the commencements of various words. This effect would be extended so as to embrace repetitions both of vowels and of consonants, in the bodies as well as in the beginnings of words; and, at a later period, would be made to infringe on the province of rhyme, by the introduction of general similarity of sound between whole feet occurring in the body of a line: — all of which modifications I have exemplified in the line above,

*M*ade in his i*m*age a *mannikin m*erely to *madden it.*

Farther cultivation would improve also the *refrain* by relieving its monotone in slightly varying the phrase at each repetition, or (as I have attempted to do in "The Raven") in retaining the phrase and varying its application — although this latter point is not strictly a rhythmical effect *alone.* Finally, poets when fairly wearied with following precedent — following it the more closely the less they perceived it in company with reason — would adventure so far as to indulge in positive rhyme at other points than the ends of lines. First, they would put it in the middle of the line; then at some point where the multiple would be less obvious; then, alarmed at their own audacity, they would undo all their work by cutting these lines in two. And here is the fruitful source of the infinity of "short metre," by which modern poetry, if not

distinguished, is at least disgraced. It would require a high degree, indeed, both of cultivation and of courage, on the part of any versifier, to enable him to place his rhymes — and let them remain — at unquestionably their best position, that of unusual and *unanticipated* intervals.

On account of the stupidity of some people, or (if talent be a more respectable word) on account of their talent for misconception, I think it necessary to add here, first, that I believe the "processes" above detailed to be nearly if not accurately those which *did* occur in the gradual creation of what we now call verse; secondly, that, although I so believe, I yet urge neither the assumed fact nor my belief in it as a part of the true propositions of this paper; thirdly, that, in regard to the aim of this paper, it is of no consequence whether these processes did occur either in the order I have assigned them, or at all; my design being simply, in presenting a general type of what such processes *might* have been and *must* have resembled, to help *them*, the "some people," to an easy understanding of what I have farther to say on the topic of verse.

There is one point which, in my summary of the processes, I have purposely forborne to touch; because this point, being the most important of all, on account of the immensity of error usually involved in its consideration, would have led me into a series of detail inconsistent with the object of a summary.

Every reader of verse must have observed how seldom it happens that even any one line proceeds uniformly with a succession, such as I have supposed, of absolutely equal feet; that is to say, with a succession of iambuses only, or of trochees only, or of

dactyls only, or of anapæsts only, or of spondees only. Even in the most musical lines we find the succession interrupted. The iambic pentameters of Pope, for example, will be found, on examination, frequently varied by trochees in the beginning, or by (what seem to be) anapæsts in the body, of the line.

Ŏh thōu | whătē | vĕr tī | tlĕ pleāse | thĭne eār |
Dĕan Drā | piĕr Bīck | ĕrstāff | ŏr Gūl | ĭvēr
Whēthĕr | thŏu choōse | Cĕrvān | tĕs' sē | rĭoŭs āir |
Ŏr laūgh | ănd shāke | ĭn Rāb | ĕlaĭs' eā | sў chāir. |

Were any one weak enough to refer to the Prosodies for the solution of the difficulty here, he would find it *solved* as usual by a *rule*, stating the fact (or what it, the rule, supposes to be the fact), but without the slightest attempt at the *rationale*. "By a *synæresis* of the two short syllables," say the books, "an anapæst may sometimes be employed for an iambus, or a dactyl for a trochee. . . . In the beginning of a line a trochee is often used for an iambus."

Blending is the plain English for *synæresis*, but there should be *no* blending; neither is an anapæst *ever* employed for an iambus, or a dactyl for a trochee. These feet differ in time; and *no* feet so differing can ever be legitimately used in the same line. An anapæst is equal to four short syllables, an iambus only to three. Dactyls and trochees hold the same relation. The principle of *equality*, in verse, admits, it is true, of variation at certain points for the relief of monotone, as I have already shown, but the point of *time* is that point which, being the rudimental one, must never be tampered with at all.

To explain: — In farther efforts for the relief of monotone than those to which I have alluded in the summary, men soon came to see that there was no

absolute necessity for adhering to the precise number of syllables, provided the time required for the whole foot was preserved inviolate. They saw, for instance, that in such a line as

Ŏr lāugh | ănd shāke | In Rāb | ĕlaĭs' ēa | sў chāir, |

the equalization of the three syllables "elais ea" with the two syllables composing any of the other feet could be readily effected by pronouncing the two syllables "elais" in double-quick time. By pronouncing each of the syllables "e" and "lais" twice as rapidly as the syllable "sy," or the syllable "in," or any other short syllable, they could bring the two of them, taken together, to the length, that is to say, to the time, of any one short syllable. This consideration enabled them to effect the agreeable variation of three syllables in place of the uniform two. And variation was the object — variation to the ear. What sense is there, then, in supposing this object rendered null by the *blending* of the two syllables so as to render them, in absolute effect, one? Of course, there must be *no* blending. Each syllable must be pronounced as distinctly as possible (or the variation is lost), but with twice the rapidity in which the ordinary short syllable is enunciated. That the syllables "elais ea" do not compose an *anapæst* is evident, and the signs (ăăā) of their accentuation are erroneous. The foot might be written thus (ᵕᵕ⏑), the inverted crescents expressing double-quick time; and might be called a bastard iambus.

Here is a trochaic line: —

Sēe thĕ | dēlĭcăte | fōotĕd | rēin-deĕr. |

The Prosodies — that is to say, the most considerate of them — would here decide that "delicate" is a dactyl

used in place of a trochee, and would refer to what they call their "rule" for justification. Others, varying the stupidity, would insist upon a Procrustean adjustment thus, "del'cate" — an adjustment recommended to all such words as "silvery, murmuring," etc., which, it is said, should be not only pronounced, but written "silv'ry, murm'ring," and so on, whenever they find themselves in trochaic predicament. I have only to say that "delicate," when circumstanced as above, is neither a dactyl nor a dactyl's equivalent; that I would suggest for it this (⏑⏑⏑) accentuation; that I think it as well to call it a bastard trochee; and that all words, at all events, should be written and pronounced *in full*, and as nearly as possible as nature intended them.

About eleven years ago, there appeared, in the "American Monthly Magazine" (then edited, I believe, by Messrs. Hoffman and Benjamin), a review of Mr. Willis's poems, the critic putting forth his strength, or his weakness, in an endeavor to show that the poet was either absurdly affected, or grossly ignorant of the laws of verse; the accusation being based altogether on the fact that Mr. Willis made occasional use of this very word "delicate," and other similar words, in "the Heroic measure, which every one knew consisted of feet of two syllables." Mr. Willis has often, for example, such lines as

> "That binds him to a woman's *delicate* love"
>
> "In the gay sunshine, *reverent* in the storm"
>
> "With its *invisible* fingers my loose hair."

Here, of course, the feet "licate love," "verent in," and "sible fin," are bastard iambuses; are *not* anapæsts; and are *not* improperly used. Their employ-

ment, on the contrary, by Mr. Willis, is but one of the innumerable instances he has given of keen sensibility in all those matters of taste which may be classed under the general head of *fanciful embellishment.*

It is also about eleven years ago, if I am not mistaken, since Mr. Horne (of England), the author of "Orion," one of the noblest epics in any language, thought it necessary to preface his "Chaucer Modernized" by a very long and evidently a very elaborate essay, of which the greater portion was occupied in a discussion of the seemingly anomalous foot of which we have been speaking. Mr. Horne upholds Chaucer in its frequent use; maintains his superiority, *on account* of his so frequently using it, over all English versifiers; and, indignantly repelling the common idea of those who make verse on their fingers — that the superfluous syllable is a roughness and an error — very chivalrously makes battle for it as "a grace." That a grace it *is*, there can be no doubt; and what I complain of is, that the author of the most happily versified long poem in existence should have been under the necessity of discussing this grace merely *as* a grace, through forty or fifty vague pages, solely because of his inability to show *how* and *why* it is a grace, by which showing the question would have been settled in an instant.

About the trochee used for an iambus, as we see in the beginning of the line,

"Whēthĕr thou choose Cervantes' serious air,"

there is little that need be said. It brings me to the general proposition, that, in all rhythms, the prevalent or distinctive feet may be varied at will, and nearly at random, by the *occasional* introduction of

equivalent feet — that is to say, feet the sum of whose syllabic times is equal to the sum of the syllabic times of the distinctive feet. Thus the trochee, "whēthĕr," is equal, in the sum of the times of its syllables, to the iambus, "thŏu choōse," in the sum of the times of *its* syllables; each foot being, in time, equal to three short syllables. Good versifiers, who happen to be also good poets, contrive to relieve the monotone of a series of feet, by the use of equivalent feet only at rare intervals, and at such points of their subject as seem in accordance with the *startling* character of the variation. Nothing of this care is seen in the line quoted above, although Pope has some fine instances of the duplicate effect. Where vehemence is to be strongly expressed, I am not sure that we should be wrong in venturing on *two consecutive* equivalent feet, although I cannot say that I have ever known the adventure made, except in the following passage, which occurs in "Al Aaraaf," a boyish poem written by myself when a boy. I am referring to the sudden and rapid advent of a star.

> Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
> Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
> Whĕn fīrst thĕ phāntŏm's cōurse wăs fōund tŏ bē
> *Hēadlŏng hīthĕr*ward o'er the starry sea.

In the "general proposition" above, I speak of the *occasional* introduction of equivalent feet. It sometimes happens that unskilful versifiers, without knowing what they do, or why they do it, introduce so many "variations" as to exceed in number the "distinctive" feet; when the ear becomes at once balked by the *bouleversement* of the rhythm. Too many trochees, for example, inserted in an iambic rhythm, would convert the latter to a trochaic. I may note here, that,

in all cases, the rhythm designed should be commenced and continued, *without* variation, until the ear has had full time to comprehend what *is* the rhythm. In violation of a rule so obviously founded in common-sense, many even of our best poets do not scruple to begin an iambic rhythm with a trochee, or the converse; or a dactylic with an anapæst, or the converse; and so on.

A somewhat less objectionable error, although still a decided one, is that of commencing a rhythm, not with a different equivalent foot, but with a "bastard" foot of the rhythm intended. For example: —

Mānў ă | thoūght wĭll | cōme tŏ | mēmŏrў. |

Here "many a" is what I have explained to be a bastard trochee, and to be understood should be accented with inverted crescents. It is objectionable solely on account of its position as the *opening* foot of a trochaic rhythm. "Memory," similarly accented, is also a bastard trochee, but *un*objectionable, although by no means demanded.

The farther illustration of this point will enable me to take an important step.

One of our finest poets, Mr. Christopher Pearse Cranch, begins a very beautiful poem thus: —

"Many are the thoughts that come to me
In my lonely musing;
And they drift so strange and swift
There 's no time for choosing
Which to follow; for to leave
Any seems a losing."

"A losing" to Mr. Cranch, of course — but this *en passant*. It will be seen here that the intention is trochaic; although we do *not* see this intention by

the opening foot, as we should do, or even by the opening line. Reading the whole stanza, however, we perceive the trochaic rhythm as the general design, and so, after some reflection, we divide the first line thus: —

Many are the | thōughts thăt | cōme tŏ | mē.

Thus scanned, the line will seem musical. It *is* — highly so. And it is because there is no end to instances of just such lines of apparently incomprehensible music that Coleridge thought proper to invent his nonsensical *system* of what he calls "scanning by accents," as if "scanning by accents" were anything more than a phrase. Whenever "Christabel" is really *not rough*, it can be as readily scanned by the true *laws* (not the supposititious *rules*) of verse as can the simplest pentameter of Pope; and where it *is* rough (*passim*), these same laws will enable any one of common-sense to show *why* it is rough and to point out instantaneously the remedy for the roughness.

A reads and re-reads a certain line, and pronounces it false in rhythm — unmusical. *B*, however, reads it *to A*, and *A* is at once struck with the perfection of the rhythm, and wonders at his dulness in not "catching" it before. Henceforward he admits the line to be musical. *B*, triumphant, asserts that, to be sure, the line is musical — for it is the work of Coleridge — and that it is *A* who is *not;* the fault being in *A's* false reading. Now here *A* is right and *B* wrong. *That* rhythm is erroneous (at some point or other, more or less obvious) which *any* ordinary reader *can*, without design, read improperly. It is the business of the poet so to construct his line that

the intention *must* be caught *at once*. Even when these men have precisely the same understanding of a sentence, they differ, and often widely, in their modes of enunciating it. Any one, who has taken the trouble to examine the topic of emphasis (by which I here mean not *accent* of particular syllables, but the dwelling on entire words), must have seen that men emphasize in the most singularly arbitrary manner. There are certain large classes of people, for example, who persist in emphasizing their monosyllables. Little uniformity of emphasis prevails; because the thing itself — the idea, emphasis — is referable to no natural, at least to no well comprehended and therefore uniform law. Beyond a very narrow and vague limit, the whole matter is conventionality. And if we differ in emphasis even when we agree in comprehension, how much more so in the former when in the latter too! Apart, however, from the consideration of natural disagreement, is it not clear that, by tripping here and mouthing there, any sequence of words may be twisted into any species of rhythm? But are we thence to deduce that all sequences of words are rhythmical in a rational understanding of the term? — for this is the deduction precisely to which the *reductio ad absurdum* will, in the end, bring all the propositions of Coleridge. Out of a hundred readers of "Christabel," fifty will be able to make nothing of its rhythm, while forty-nine of the remaining fifty will, with some ado, fancy they comprehend it after the fourth or fifth perusal. The one out of the whole hundred who shall both comprehend and admire it at first sight must be an unaccountably clever person; and I am by far too modest to assume, for a moment, that that very clever person is myself.

In illustration of what is here advanced I cannot do better than quote a poem: —

> " Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold,
> Pease porridge in the pot, nine days old."

Now those of my readers who have never *heard* this poem pronounced according to the nursery conventionality will find its rhythm as obscure as an explanatory note; while those who *have* heard it, will divide it thus, declare it musical, and wonder how there can be any doubt about it.

> Pease | porridge | hot | pease | porridge | cold |
> Pease | porridge | in the | pot | nine | days | old. |

The chief thing in the way of this species of rhythm is the necessity which it imposes upon the poet of travelling in constant company with his compositions, so as to be ready at a moment's notice to avail himself of a well-understood poetical license — that of reading aloud one's own doggerel.

In Mr. Cranch's line,

> Many are the | thoughts that | come to | me, |

the general error of which I speak is, of course, very partially exemplified, and the purpose for which, chiefly, I cite it, lies yet further on in our topic.

The two divisions, " thoughts that " and " come to," are ordinary trochees. Of the last division, " me," we will talk hereafter. The first division, " many are the," would be thus accented by the Greek Prosodies, " mānў ăre thĕ," and would be called by them *ἀστρόλογος*. The Latin books would style the foot *Pæon Primus*, and both Greek and Latin would swear that it was composed of a trochee and what they term a

pyrrhic — that is to say, a foot of two *short* syllables — a thing that *cannot be*, as I shall presently show.

But now there is an obvious difficulty. The *astrologos*, according to the Prosodies' own showing, is equal to *five* short syllables, and the trochee to *three;* yet, in the line quoted, these two feet are equal. They occupy *precisely* the same time. In fact, the whole music of the line depends upon their being *made* to occupy the same time. The Prosodies, then, have demonstrated what all mathematicians have stupidly failed in demonstrating — that three and five are one and the same thing.

After what I have already said, however, about the bastard trochee and the bastard iambus, no one can have any trouble in understanding that "many are the" is of similar character. It is merely a bolder variation than usual from the routine of trochees, and introduces to the bastard trochee one additional syllable. But this syllable is not *short.* That is, it is not short in the sense of "short" as applied to the final syllable of the ordinary trochee, where the word means merely *the half of long.*

In this case (that of the additional syllable), "short," if used at all, must be used in the sense of *the sixth of long.* And all the three final syllables can be called "short" only with the same understanding of the term. The three together are equal only to the one short syllable (whose place they supply) of the ordinary trochee. It follows that there is no sense in thus (˘) accenting these syllables. We must devise for them some new character which shall denote the sixth of long. Let it be (ς) — the crescent placed with the curve to the left. The whole foot, "mānў ărе thĕ," might be called a *quick trochee.*

We come now to the final division, "me," of Mr. Cranch's line. It is clear that this foot, short as it appears, is fully equal in time to each of the preceding. It is in fact the cæsura — the foot which, in the beginning of this paper, I called the most important in all verse. Its chief office is that of pause or termination; and here — at the end of a line — its use is easy, because there is no danger of misapprehending its value. We pause on it, by a seeming necessity, just so long as it has taken us to pronounce the preceding feet, whether iambuses, trochees, dactyls, or anapæsts. It is thus a *variable foot*, and, with some care, may be well introduced into the body of a line, as in a little poem of great beauty by Mrs. Welby: —

I have | a lit | tle step | s̆o͡n̆ | of on | ly three | years old. |

Here we dwell on the cæsura, *son*, just as long as it requires us to pronounce either of the preceding or succeeding iambuses. Its value, therefore, in this line, is that of three short syllables. In the following dactylic line its value is that of four short syllables.

Pale as a | lily was | Emily | Ğr̆ăy̆.

I have accented the cæsura with a (⏑⏑) by way of expressing this variability of value.

I observed just now that there could be no such foot as one of two short syllables. What we start from, in the very beginning of all idea on the topic of verse, is quantity, *length*. Thus when we enunciate an independent syllable it is long, as a matter of course. If we enunciate two, dwelling on both equally, we express equality in the enumeration, or length, and have a right to call them two long syllables. If we dwell on one more than the other, we

have also a right to call one short, because it is short in relation to the other. But if we dwell on both equally and with a tripping voice, saying to ourselves here are two short syllables, the query might well be asked of us — "in relation to what are they short?" Shortness is but the negation of length. To say, then, that two syllables, placed independently of any other syllable, are short, is merely to say that they have no positive length, or enunciation — in other words that they are no syllables — that they do not exist at all. And if, persisting, we add anything about their equality, we are merely floundering in the idea of an identical equation, where, x being equal to x, nothing is shown to be equal to zero. In a word, we can form no conception of a pyrrhic as of an independent foot. It is a mere chimera bred in the mad fancy of a pedant.

From what I have said about the equalization of the several feet of a *line*, it must not be deduced that any *necessity* for equality in time exists between the rhythm of *several* lines. A poem, or even a stanza, may begin with iambuses, in the first line, and proceed with anapæsts in the second, or even with the less accordant dactyls, as in the opening of quite a pretty specimen of verse by Miss Mary A. S. Aldrich:

The wa | ter li | ly sleeps | in pride |
Dōwn ĭn thĕ | dēpths ŏf thĕ | āzūre | l͡a͡ke. |

Here *azure* is a spondee, equivalent to a dactyl; *lake* a cæsura.

I shall now best proceed in quoting the initial lines of Byron's "Bride of Abydos": —

"Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,

Now melt into softness, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
. . . . . .
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all save the spirit of man is divine?
'T is the clime of the East — 't is the land of the Sun —
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
Oh, wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts that they bear and the tales that they tell!"

Now the flow of these lines (as times go) is very sweet and musical. They have been often admired, and justly — as times go; that is to say, it is a rare thing to find better versification of its kind. And where verse is pleasant to the ear, it is silly to find fault with it because it refuses to be scanned. Yet I have heard men, professing to be scholars, who made no scruple of abusing these lines of Byron's on the ground that they were musical in spite of *all law*. Other gentlemen, *not* scholars, abused "all law" for the same reason; and it occurred neither to the one party nor to the other that the law about which they were disputing might possibly be no law at all — an ass of a law in the skin of a lion.

The grammars said something about dactylic lines, and it was easily seen that *these* lines were at least meant for dactylic. The first one was, therefore, thus divided: —

Knōw yĕ thĕ | lānd whĕre thĕ | cȳprĕss ănd | mȳrtlĕ. |

The concluding foot was a mystery; but the Prosodies said something about the dactylic "measure"

calling now and then for a double rhyme; and the court of inquiry were content to rest in the double rhyme without exactly perceiving what a double rhyme had to do with the question of an irregular foot. Quitting the first line, the second was thus scanned: —

Āre ĕmblĕms | ōf deĕds thăt | āre dŏne ĭn | thēir clīme. |

It was immediately seen, however, that *this* would not do; it was at war with the whole emphasis of the reading. It could not be supposed that Byron, or any one in his senses, intended to place stress upon such monosyllables as "are," "of," and "their," nor could "their clime," collated with "to crime" in the corresponding line below, be fairly twisted into anything like a "double rhyme" so as to bring everything within the category of the grammars. But farther these grammars spoke not. The inquirers, therefore, in spite of their sense of harmony in the lines, when considered without reference to scansion, fell back upon the idea that the "Are" was a blunder — an excess for which the poet should be sent to Coventry — and, striking it out, they scanned the remainder of the line as follows: —

—— ēmblĕms ŏf | deēds thăt ăre | dōne ĭn thĕir | clīme. |

This answered pretty well; but the grammars admitted no such foot as a foot of one syllable; and besides the rhythm was dactylic. In despair, the books are well searched, however, and at last the investigators are gratified by a full solution of the riddle in the profound "Observation" quoted in the beginning of this article: — "When a syllable is wanting, the verse is said to be catalectic; when the measure is exact, the line is acatalectic; when there is a redundant

syllable, it forms hypermeter." This is enough. The anomalous line is pronounced to be catalectic at the head and to form hypermeter at the tail: — and so on, and so on, it being soon discovered that nearly all the remaining lines are in a similar predicament, and that what flows so smoothly to the ear, although so roughly to the eye, is, after all, a mere jumble of catalecticism, acatalecticism, and hypermeter — not to say worse.

Now, had this court of inquiry been in possession of even the shadow of the *philosophy* of verse, they would have had no trouble in reconciling this oil and water of the eye and ear by merely scanning the passage without reference to lines, and continuously, thus: —

> Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle Are | emblems of | deeds that are | done in their | clime Where the | rage of the | vulture the | love of the | turtle Now | melt into | softness now | madden to | *crime* | Know ye the | land of the | cedar and | vine Where the | flowers ever | blossom the | beams ever | shine Where the | light wings of | Zephyr op | pressed with per | *fume Wax* | faint o'er the | gardens of | Gul in her | bloom Where the | citron and | olive are | fairest of | fruit And the | voice of the | nightingale | never is | mute Where the | virgins are | soft as the | roses they | *twine And* | all save the | spirit of | man is di | vine 'T is the | clime of the | East 't is the | land of the | Sun Can he | smile on such | deeds as his | children have | *done Oh* | wild as the | accents of | lovers' fare | well Are the | hearts that they | bear and the | tales that they | *tell.*

Here "crime" and "tell" (italicised) are cæsuras, each having the value of a dactyl, four short syllables; while "fume Wax," "twine And," and "done Oh," are spondees which, of course, being composed of two long syllables, are also equal to four short, and are the dactyl's natural equivalent. The nicety of

Byron's ear has led him into a succession of feet which, with two trivial exceptions as regards melody, are absolutely accurate — a very rare occurrence this in dactylic or anapæstic rhythms. The exceptions are found in the spondee "twine And," and the dactyl, "smile on such." Both feet are false in point of melody. In "twine And," to make out the rhythm, we must force "And" into a length which it will not naturally bear. We are called on to sacrifice either the proper length of the syllable as demanded by its position as a member of a spondee, or the customary accentuation of the word in conversation. There is no hesitation, and should be none. We at once give up the sound for the sense; and the rhythm is imperfect. In this instance it is *very* slightly so; — not one person in ten thousand could, by ear, detect the inaccuracy. But the *perfection* of verse, as regards melody, consists in its *never* demanding any such sacrifice as is here demanded. The rhythmical must agree, *thoroughly*, with the reading flow. This perfection has in no instance been attained, but is unquestionably attainable. "Smile on such," the dactyl, is incorrect, because "such," from the character of the two consonants "ch," cannot *easily* be enunciated in the ordinary time of a short syllable, which its position declares that it is. Almost every reader will be able to appreciate the slight difficulty here; and yet the error is by no means so important as that of the "And" in the spondee. By dexterity we *may* pronounce "such" in the true time; but the attempt to remedy the rhythmical deficiency of the "And" by drawing it out, merely aggravates the offence against natural enunciation by directing attention to the offence.

My main object, however, in quoting these lines, is to show that, in spite of the Prosodies, the length of a line is entirely an arbitrary matter. We might divide the commencement of Byron's poem thus: —

Know ye the | land where the. |

or thus: —

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and. |

or thus: —

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle are. |

or thus: —

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle are | emblems of. |

In short, we may give it any division we please, and the lines will be good, provided we have at least *two* feet in a line. As in mathematics two units are required to form number, so rhythm (from the Greek ἄριθμος, number) demands for its formation at least two feet. Beyond doubt, we often see such lines as

Know ye the —
Land where the —

lines of one foot; and our Prosodies admit such, but with impropriety; for common-sense would dictate that every so obvious division of a poem as is made by a line should include within itself all that is necessary for its own comprehension; but in a line of one foot we can have no appreciation of *rhythm*, which depends upon the equality between *two* or more pulsations. The false lines, consisting sometimes of a single cæsura, which are seen in mock Pindaric odes, are of course "rhythmical" only in connection with some other line; and it is this want of independent rhythm which adapts them to the purposes of bur-

lesque alone. Their effect is that of incongruity (the principle of mirth), for they include the blankness of prose amid the harmony of verse.

My second object in quoting Byron's lines was that of showing how absurd it often is to cite a single line from amid the body of a poem for the purpose of instancing the perfection or imperfection of the line's rhythm. Were we to see by itself

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle,

we might justly condemn it as defective in the final foot, which is equal to only three, instead of being equal to four, short syllables.

In the foot "flowers ever" we shall find a further exemplification of the principle of the bastard iambus, bastard trochee, and quick trochee, as I have been at some pains in describing these feet above. All the Prosodies on English verse would insist upon making an elision in "flowers," thus "flow'rs," but this is nonsense. In the quick trochee, "mānў ărе thĕ," occurring in Mr. Cranch's *trochaic* line, we had to equalize the time of the three syllables, "ny, are, the," to that of the one *short* syllable whose position they usurp. Accordingly each of these syllables is equal to the third of a short syllable, that is to say, the *sixth of a long.* But in Byron's *dactylic* rhythm, we have to equalize the time of the three syllables "ers, ev, er" to that of the one *long* syllable whose position they usurp, or (which is the same thing) of the *two short.* Therefore the value of each of the syllables "ers, ev," and "er" is the *third of a long.* We enunciate them with only half the rapidity we employ in enunciating the three final syllables of the quick trochee — which latter is a rare foot. The "flowers

ever," on the contrary, is as common in the dactylic rhythm as is the *bastard* trochee in the trochaic, or the bastard iambus in the iambic. We may as well accent it with the curve of the crescent to the right, and call it a *bastard dactyl*. A *bastard anapæst*, whose nature I now need be at no trouble in explaining, will of course occur, now and then, in an anapæstic rhythm.

In order to avoid any chance of that confusion which is apt to be introduced, in an essay of this kind, by too sudden and radical an alteration of the conventionalities to which the reader has been accustomed, I have thought it right to suggest for the accent marks of the bastard trochee, bastard iambus, etc., etc., certain characters which, in merely varying the direction of the ordinary short accent (˘), should imply — what is the fact — that the feet themselves are not *new* feet, in any proper sense, but simply modifications of the feet, respectively, from which they derive their names. Thus a bastard iambus is, in its essentiality — that is to say, in its time — an iambus. The variation lies only in the *distribution* of this time. The time, for example, occupied by the one short (or *half of long*) syllable, in the ordinary iambus, is, in the bastard, spread equally over two syllables, which are accordingly the *fourth of long*.

But this fact — the fact of the essentiality, or whole time, of the foot being unchanged — is now so fully before the reader, that I may venture to propose, finally, an accentuation which shall answer the real purpose — that is to say, what should be the real purpose of all accentuation — the purpose of expressing to the eye the exact relative value of every syllable employed in verse.

I have already shown that enunciation, or *length*, is the point from which we start. In other words, we begin with a *long syllable.* This then is our unit; and there will be no need of accenting it at all. An unaccented syllable, in a system of accentuation, is to be regarded always as a long syllable. Thus a spondee would be without accent. In an iambus, the first syllable being "short," or the *half* of long, should be accented with a small 2, placed *beneath* the syllable; the last syllable, being long, should be unaccented; the whole would be thus — "control." In a trochee, these accents would be merely conversed, thus "manly." In a dactyl, each of the two final syllables, being the half of long, should, also, be accented with a small 2 beneath the syllable; and, the first syllable left unaccented, the whole would be thus — "happiness." In an anapæst we should converse the dactyl thus — "in the land." In the bastard dactyl, each of the three concluding syllables being the *third* of long, should be accented with a small 3 beneath the syllable, and the whole foot would stand thus — "flowers ever." In the bastard anapæst we should converse the bastard dactyl thus — "in the rebound." In the bastard iambus, each of the two initial syllables, being the fourth of long, should be accented, below, with a small 4; the whole foot would be thus — "in the rain." In the bastard trochee, we should converse the bastard iambus thus — "many a." In the quick trochee, each of the three concluding syllables, being the *sixth* of long, should be accented,

below, with a small 6; the whole foot would be thus — "many are the." The quick iambus is not yet
6 6 6
created, and most probably never will be; for it will be excessively useless, awkward, and liable to misconception, as I have already shown that even the quick trochee is; but, should it appear, we must accent it by conversing the quick trochee. The cæsura, being variable in length, but always *longer than* "*long*," should be accented, *above*, with a number expressing the length, or value, of the distinctive foot of the rhythm in which it occurs. Thus a cæsura, occurring in a spondaic rhythm, would be accented with a small 2 above the syllable, or, rather, foot. Occurring in a dactylic or anapæstic rhythm, we also accent it with the 2, above the foot. Occurring in an iambic rhythm, however, it must be accented, above, with $1\frac{1}{2}$; for this is the relative value of the iambus. Occurring in the trochaic rhythm, we give it, of course, the same accentuation. For the complex $1\frac{1}{2}$, however, it would be advisable to substitute the simpler expression $\frac{3}{2}$, which amounts to the same thing.

In this system of accentuation Mr. Cranch's lines, quoted above, would thus be written: —

$\frac{3}{2}$
Many are the | thoughts that | come to | me
6 6 6 2 2
In my | lonely | musing |
2 2 2

$\frac{3}{2}$
And they | drift so | strange and | swift
2 2 2
There's no | time for | choosing |
2 2 2

$\frac{3}{2}$
Which to | follow | for to | leave
2 2 2
Any, | seems a | losing. |
2 2 2

In the ordinary system the accentuation would be thus: —

Mānў ărе thĕ | thōughts thăt | cōme tŏ | mē
Īn mў | lōnelў | mūsĭng, |
Ānd thĕy | drīft sŏ | strānge ănd | swĭft |
Thērе 's nŏ | tīme fŏr | choōsĭng |
Whĭch tŏ | fōllŏw, | fōr tŏ | lēave
Ānў, | seēms ă | lōsĭng. |

It must be observed, here, that I do not grant this to be the "ordinary" *scansion*. On the contrary, I never yet met the man who had the faintest comprehension of the true scanning of these lines, or of such as these. But granting this to be the mode in which our Prosodies would divide the feet, they would accentuate the syllables as just above.

Now, let any reasonable person compare the two modes. The first advantage seen in my mode is that of simplicity — of time, labor, and ink saved. Counting the fractions as *two* accents, even, there will be found only *twenty-six* accents to the stanza. In the common accentuation there are *forty-one*. But admit that all this is a trifle, which it is *not*, and let us proceed to points of importance. Does the common accentuation express the truth, in particular, in general, or in any regard? Is it consistent with itself? Does it convey either to the ignorant or to the scholar a just conception of the rhythm of the lines? Each of these questions must be answered in the negative. The crescents, being precisely similar, must be understood as expressing, all of them, one and the same thing; and so all Prosodies have always understood them and wished them to be understood. They express, indeed, "short" — but this word has all kinds of meanings. It serves to represent (the reader is left to guess *when*)

sometimes the half, sometimes the third, sometimes the fourth, sometimes the sixth, of "long" — while "long" itself, in the books, is left undefined and undescribed. On the other hand, the horizontal accent, it may be said, expresses sufficiently well, and unvaryingly, the syllables which are meant to be long. It does nothing of the kind. This horizontal accent is placed over the cæsura (wherever, as in the Latin Prosodies, the cæsura is recognized) as well as over the ordinary long syllable, and implies anything and everything, just as the crescent. But grant that it does express the ordinary long syllables (leaving the cæsura out of question), have I not given the identical expression, by not employing any expression at all? In a word, while the Prosodies, with a certain number of accents, express *precisely nothing whatever*, I, with scarcely half the number, have expressed everything which, in a system of accentuation, demands expression. In glancing at my mode in the lines of Mr. Cranch, it will be seen that it conveys not only the exact relation of the syllables and feet, among themselves, in those particular lines, but their precise value in relation to any other existing or conceivable feet or syllables, in any existing or conceivable system of rhythm.

The object of what we call *scansion* is the distinct marking of the rhythmical flow. Scansion with accents or perpendicular lines between the feet — that is to say, scansion *by* the voice only — is scansion *to* the ear only; and all very good in its way. The written scansion addresses the ear through the eye. In either case the object is the distinct marking of the rhythmical, musical, or reading flow. There *can* be no other object and there is none. Of course, then, the scan-

sion and the reading flow should go hand in hand. The former must agree with the latter. The former represents and expresses the latter, and is good or bad as it truly or falsely represents and expresses it. If by the written scansion of a line we are not enabled to perceive any rhythm or music in the line, then either the line is unrhythmical or the scansion false. Apply all this to the English lines which we have quoted, at various points, in the course of this article. It will be found that the scansion exactly conveys the rhythm, and thus thoroughly fulfils the only purpose for which scansion is required.

But let the scansion *of the schools* be applied to the Greek and Latin verse, and what result do we find? — that the verse is one thing and the scansion quite another. The ancient verse, *read* aloud, is in general musical, and occasionally *very* musical. *Scanned* by the Prosodial rules we can, for the most part, make nothing of it whatever. In the case of the English verse, the more emphatically we dwell on the divisions between the feet, the more distinct is our perception of the kind of rhythm intended. In the case of the Greek and Latin, the more we dwell the *less* distinct is this perception. To make this clear by an example: —

> "Mæcenas, atavis edite regibus,
> O et præsidium et dulce decus meum,
> Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
> Collegisse juvat, metaque fervidis
> Evitata rotis, palmaque nobilis
> Terrarum dominos evehit ad Deos."

Now in *reading* these lines, there is scarcely one person in a thousand who, if even ignorant of Latin, will not immediately feel and appreciate their flow

—their music. A prosodist, however, informs the public that the *scansion* runs thus: —

Mæce | nas ata | vis | edite | regibus |
O, et | præsidi' | et | dulce de | cus meum |
Sunt quos | curricu | lo | pulver' O | lympicum |
Colle | gisse ju | vat | metaque | fervidis |
Evi | tata ro | tis | palmaque | nobilis |
Terra | rum domi | nos | evehit | ad Deos. |

Now I do not deny that we get a *certain sort* of music from the lines if we read them according to this scansion, but I wish to call attention to the fact that this scansion and the certain sort of music which grows out of it, are entirely at war not only with the reading flow which any ordinary person would naturally give the lines, but with the reading flow universally given them, and never denied them, by even the most obstinate and stolid of scholars.

And now these questions are forced upon us — "Why exists this discrepancy between the modern verse with its scansion, and the ancient verse with its scansion?" — "Why, in the former case, are there agreement and representation, while in the latter there is neither the one nor the other?" or, to come to the point, — "How are we to reconcile the ancient verse with the scholastic scansion of it?" This absolutely necessary conciliation — shall we bring it about by supposing the scholastic scansion wrong because the ancient verse is right, or by maintaining that the ancient verse is wrong because the scholastic scansion is not to be gainsaid?

Were we to adopt the latter mode of arranging the difficulty, we might, in some measure, at least simplify the expression of the arrangement by putting it thus

— Because the pedants have no eyes, therefore the old poets had no ears.

"But," say the gentlemen without the eyes, "the scholastic scansion, although certainly not handed down to us in form from the old poets themselves (the gentlemen without the ears), is nevertheless deduced from certain facts which are supplied us by careful observation of the old poems."

And let us illustrate this strong position by an example from an American poet — who must be a poet of some eminence, or he will not answer the purpose. Let us take Mr. Alfred B. Street. I remember these two lines of his: —

> "His sinuous path, by blazes, wound
> Among trunks grouped in myriads round."

With the *sense* of these lines I have nothing to do. When a poet is in a "fine frenzy," he may as well imagine a large forest as a small one — and "by blazes!" is *not* intended for an oath. My concern is with the rhythm, which is iambic.

Now let us suppose that, a thousand years hence, when the "American language" is dead, a learned prosodist should be deducing, from "careful observation" of our best poets, a system of scansion for our poetry. And let us suppose that this prosodist had so little dependence in the generality and immutability of the laws of Nature as to assume in the outset, that, because we lived a thousand years before his time, and made use of steam-engines instead of mesmeric balloons, we must therefore have had a *very* singular fashion of mouthing our vowels, and altogether of Hudsonizing our verse. And let us suppose that with these and other fundamental propositions

carefully put away in his brain, he should arrive at the line, —

Among | trunks grouped | in my | riads round.

Finding it an obviously iambic rhythm, he would divide it as above; and observing that "trunks" made the first member of an iambus, he would call it short, as Mr. Street intended it to be. Now farther: — if instead of admitting the possibility that Mr. Street (who by that time would be called Street simply, just as we say Homer), that Mr. Street might have been in the habit of writing carelessly, as the poets of the prosodist's own era did, and as all poets will do (on account of being geniuses) — instead of admitting this, suppose the learned scholar should make a "rule" and put it in a book, to the effect that, in the American verse, the vowel *u*, *when found imbedded among nine consonants*, was *short;* what, under such circumstances, would the sensible people of the scholar's day have a right not only to think, but to say of that scholar? — why, that he was "a fool — by blazes!"

I have put an extreme case, but it strikes at the root of the error. The "rules" are grounded in "authority;" and this "authority" — can any one tell us what it means? or can any one suggest anything that it may *not* mean? Is it not clear that the "scholar" above referred to might as readily have deduced from authority a totally false system as a partially true one? To deduce from authority a consistent prosody of the ancient metres would indeed have been within the limits of the barest possibility; and the task has not been accomplished, for the reason that it demands a species of ratiocination

altogether out of keeping with the brain of a book-worm. A rigid scrutiny will show that the very few "rules" which have not as many exceptions as examples, are those which have, by accident, their true bases not in authority, but in the omniprevalent laws of syllabification; such, for example, as the rule which declares a vowel before two consonants to be long.

In a word, the gross confusion and antagonism of the scholastic prosody, as well as its marked inapplicability to the reading flow of the rhythms it pretends to illustrate, are attributable, first, to the utter absence of natural principle as a guide in the investigations which have been undertaken by inadequate men; and secondly, to the neglect of the obvious consideration that the ancient poems, which have been the *criteria* throughout, were the work of men who must have written as loosely, and with as little definitive system, as ourselves.

Were Horace alive to-day, he would divide for us his first Ode thus, and "make great eyes" when assured by the prosodists that he had no business to make any such division: —

Mæcenas | atavis | edite | regibus |
2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

O et præ | sidium et | dulce de | cus meum |
2 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 2

Sunt quos cur | riculo | pulverem O | lympicum
2 2 2 2 3 3 3 2 2

Collegisse | juvat | metaque | fervidis |
3 3 3 2 2 2 2

Evitata | rotis | palmaque | nobilis |
3 3 3 2 2 2 2

Terrarum | dominos | evehit | ad Deos. |
2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

Read by this scansion, the flow is preserved; and the more we dwell on the divisions, the more the intended

rhythm becomes apparent. Moreover, the feet have all the same time; while, in the scholastic scansion, trochees — admitted trochees — are absurdly employed as equivalents to spondees and dactyls. The books declare, for instance, that "Colle," which begins the fourth line, is a trochee, and seem to be gloriously unconscious that to put a trochee in opposition with a longer foot is to violate the inviolable principle of all music, *time*.

It will be said, however, by "some people," that I have no business to make a dactyl out of such obviously long syllables as "sunt, quos, cur." Certainly I have no business to do so. I never do so. And Horace should not have done so. But he did. Mr. Bryant and Mr. Longfellow do the same thing every day. And merely because these gentlemen, now and then, forget themselves in this way, it would be hard if some future prosodist should insist upon twisting the "Thanatopsis," or the "Spanish Student," into a jumble of trochees, spondees, and dactyls.

It may be said, also, by some other people, that in the word "decus," I have succeeded no better than the books, in making the scansional agree with the reading flow; and that "decus" was not pronounced "de*cus*." I reply, that there can be no doubt of the word having been pronounced, in this case, "de*cus*." It must be observed, that the Latin inflection, or variation of a word in its terminating syllables, caused the Romans — *must* have caused them — to pay greater attention to the termination of a word than to its commencement, or than we do to the terminations of our words. The end of the Latin word established that relation of the word with other words which we establish by prepositions or auxiliary

verbs. Therefore, it would seem infinitely less odd to them than it does to us, to dwell at any time, for any slight purpose, abnormally, on a terminating syllable. In verse, this license — scarcely a license — would be frequently admitted. These ideas unlock the secret of such lines as the

"Litoreis ingens inventa sub ilici*bus sus*,"

and the

"Parturiunt montes et nascitur ridicu*lus mus*,"

which I quoted, some time ago, while speaking of rhyme.

As regards the Prosodial elisions, such as that of "rem" before "O," in "pulverem Olympicum," it is really difficult to understand how so dismally silly a notion could have entered the brain even of a pedant. Were it demanded of me why the books cut off one *vowel* before another, I might say — "It is, perhaps, because the books think that, since a bad reader is so apt to slide the one vowel into the other at any rate, it is just as well to print them *ready-slided*." But in the case of the terminating "m," which is the most readily pronounced of all consonants (as the infantile "mamma" will testify), and the most impossible to cheat the ear of by any system of sliding — in the case of the "m," I should be driven to reply that, to the best of my belief, the prosodists did the thing because they had a fancy for doing it, and wished to see how funny it would look after it was done. The thinking reader will perceive that, from the great facility with which "em" may be enunciated, it is admirably suited to form one of the rapid short syllables in the bastard dactyl "pulverem O."

3 3 3

but because the books had no conception of a bastard

dactyl, they knocked it in the head at once — by cutting off its tail!

Let me now give a specimen of the true scansion of another Horatian measure — embodying an instance of proper elision.

Integer | vitæ | scelerisque | purus |
2 2 3 3 3
Non eget | Mauri | jaculis ne | que arcu |
2 2 3 3 3
Nec vene | natis | gravida sa | gittis,
2 2 3 3 3
Fusce, pha | retrâ.
2 2

Here the regular recurrence of the bastard dactyl gives great animation to the rhythm. The "e" before the "a" in "que arcu," is, almost of sheer necessity, cut off — that is to say, run into the "a" so as to preserve the spondee. But even this license it would have been better not to take.

Had I space, nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to proceed with the scansion of all the ancient rhythms, and to show how easily, by the help of common-sense, the intended music of each and all can be rendered instantaneously apparent. But I have already overstepped my limits, and must bring this paper to an end.

It will never do, however, to omit all mention of the heroic hexameter.

I began the "processes" by a suggestion of the spondee as the first step towards verse. But the innate monotony of the spondee has caused its disappearance, as the basis of rhythm, from all modern poetry. We *may* say, indeed, that the French heroic — the most wretchedly monotonous verse in existence — is, to all intents and purposes, spondaic. But it is not designedly spondaic — and if the French were ever to examine it at all, they would no doubt pro-

nounce it iambic. It must be observed, that the French language is strangely peculiar in this point — *that it is without accentuation, and consequently without verse.* The genius of the people, rather than the structure of the tongue, declares that their words are, for the most part, enunciated with an uniform dwelling on each syllable. For example — *we* say, "syl*la*bifi*ca*tion." A Frenchman would say, "syl-la-bi-fi-ca-ti-on," dwelling on no one of the syllables with any noticeable particularity. Here again I put an extreme case, in order to be well understood; but the general fact is as I give it — that, comparatively, the French have no accentuation. And there can be nothing worth the name of verse, without. Therefore, the French have no verse worth the name — which is the fact, put in sufficiently plain terms. Their iambic rhythm so superabounds in absolute spondees as to warrant me in calling its basis spondaic; but French is the only modern tongue which has any rhythm with such basis; and even in the French, it is, as I have said, unintentional.

Admitting, however, the validity of my suggestion, that the spondee was the first approach to verse, we should expect to find, first, natural spondees (words each forming just a spondee) most abundant in the most ancient languages; and, secondly, we should expect to find spondees forming the basis of the most ancient rhythms. These expectations are in both cases confirmed.

Of the Greek hexameter, the intentional basis is spondaic. The dactyls are the variation of the theme. It will be observed that there is no absolute certainty about their points of interposition. The penultimate foot, it is true, is usually a dactyl, but not uniformly

so; while the ultimate, on which the ear lingers, is always a spondee. Even that the penultimate is usually a dactyl may be clearly referred to the necessity of winding up with the distinctive spondee. In corroboration of this idea, again, we should look to find the penultimate spondee most usual in the most ancient verse; and, accordingly, we find it more frequent in the Greek than in the Latin hexameter.

But besides all this, spondees are not only more prevalent in the heroic hexameter than dactyls, but occur to such an extent as is even unpleasant to modern ears, on account of monotony. What the modern chiefly appreciates and admires in the Greek hexameter, is the *melody of the abundant vowel sounds*. The Latin hexameters really please very few moderns, although so many pretend to fall into ecstasies about them. In the hexameters quoted, several pages ago, from Silius Italicus, the preponderance of the spondee is strikingly manifest. Besides the natural spondees of the Greek and Latin, numerous artificial ones arise in the verse of these tongues on account of the tendency which inflection has to throw full accentuation on terminal syllables; and the preponderance of the spondee is farther insured by the comparative infrequency of the small prepositions which we have to serve us instead of case, and also the absence of the diminutive auxiliary verbs with which we have to eke out the expression of our primary ones. These are the monosyllables whose abundance serve to stamp the poetic genius of a language as tripping or dactylic.

Now paying no attention to these facts, Sir Philip Sidney, Professor Longfellow, and innumerable other persons more or less modern, have busied themselves

in constructing what they supposed to be "English hexameters on the model of the Greek." The only difficulty was that (even leaving out of question the melodious masses of vowels) these gentlemen never could get their English hexameters to *sound* Greek. Did they *look* Greek? — that should have been the query; and the reply might have led to a solution of the riddle. In placing a copy of ancient hexameters side by side with a copy (in similar type) of such hexameters as Professor Longfellow, or Professor Felton, or the Frogpondian Professors collectively, are in the shameful practice of composing "on the model of the Greek," it will be seen that the latter (hexameters, not professors) are about one third longer *to the eye*, on an average, than the former. The more abundant dactyls make the difference. And it is the greater number of spondees in the Greek than in the English — in the ancient than in the modern tongue — which has caused it to fall out that while these eminent scholars were groping about in the dark for a Greek hexameter, which is a spondaic rhythm varied now and then by dactyls, they merely stumbled, to the lasting scandal of scholarship, over something which, on account of its long-leggedness, we may as well term a Feltonian hexameter, and which is a dactylic rhythm, interrupted, rarely, by artificial spondees which are no spondees at all, and which are curiously thrown in by the heels at all kinds of improper and impertinent points.

Here is a specimen of the Longfellownian hexameter:

Also the | church with | in was a | dorned for | this was the | season |
When the | young their | parents' | hope and the | loved ones of | Heaven |

Should at the | foot of the | altar re | new the | vows of their | baptism |
Therefore each | nook and | corner was | swept and | cleaned and the | dust was |
Blown from the | walls and | ceiling and | from the | oil-painted | benches. |

Mr. Longfellow is a man of imagination — but *can* he imagine that any individual, with a proper understanding of the danger of lockjaw, would make the attempt of twisting his mouth into the shape necessary for the emission of such spondees as "par*ents*," and "from the," or such dactyls as "cleaned and the" and "loved ones of"? "Baptism" is by no means a bad spondee — perhaps because it happens to be a dactyl; — of all the rest, however, I am dreadfully ashamed.

But these feet — dactyls and spondees, all together — should thus be put at once into their proper position:

"Also the church within was adorned; for this was the season when the young, their parents' hope, and the loved ones of Heaven, should, at the feet of the altar, renew the vows of their baptism. Therefore, each nook and corner was swept and cleaned; and the dust was blown from the walls and ceiling, and from the oil-painted benches."

There! — That is respectable prose; and it will incur no danger of ever getting its character ruined by anybody's mistaking it for verse.

But even when we let these modern hexameters go, as Greek, and merely hold them fast in their proper character of Longfellownian, or Feltonian, or Frog-pondian, we must still condemn them as having been committed in a radical misconception of the philosophy of verse. The spondee, as I observed, is the *theme* of the Greek line. Most of the ancient hex-

ameters *begin* with spondees, for the reason that the spondee *is* the theme; and the ear is filled with it as with a burden. Now the Feltonian dactylics have, in the same way, dactyls for the theme, and most of them begin with dactyls — which is all very proper if not very Greek — but, unhappily, the one point at which they *are* very Greek is that point, precisely, at which they should be nothing but Feltonian. They always *close* with what is meant for a spondee. To be consistently silly, they should die off in a dactyl.

That a truly Greek hexameter *cannot*, however, be readily composed in English, is a proposition which I am by no means inclined to admit. I think I could manage the point myself. For example: —

Do tell! | when may we | hope to make | men of sense | out of the | Pundits |
Born and brought | up with their | snouts deep | down in the | mud of the | Frog-pond?
Why ask? | who ever | yet saw | money made | out of a | fat old |
Jew, or | downright | upright | nutmegs | out of a | pine-knot? |

The proper spondee predominance is here preserved. Some of the dactyls are not so good as I could wish; but, upon the whole, the rhythm is very decent — to say nothing of its excellent sense.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

MR. BRYANT'S position in the poetical world is, perhaps, better settled than that of any American. There is less difference of opinion about his rank; but, as usual, the agreement is more decided in private literary circles than in what appears to be the public expression of sentiment as gleaned from the press. I may as well observe here, too, that this coincidence of opinion in private circles is in all cases very noticeable when compared with the discrepancy of the apparent public opinion. In private it is quite a rare thing to find any strongly-marked disagreement — I mean, of course, about mere authorial merit. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time freely with the literary people about him, is invariably startled and delighted to find that the decisions of his own unbiassed judgment — decisions to which he has refrained from giving voice on account of their broad contradiction to the decision of the press — are sustained and considered quite as matters of course by almost every person with whom he converses. The fact is, that, when brought face to face with each other, we are constrained to a certain amount of honesty by the sheer trouble it causes us to mould the countenance to a lie. We put on paper with a grave air what we could not for our lives assert personally to a friend without either blushing or laughing outright. That

the opinion of the press is not an honest opinion — that necessarily it is impossible that it should be an honest opinion — is never denied by the members of the press themselves. Individual presses, of course, are now and then honest, but I speak of the combined effect. Indeed, it would be difficult for those conversant with the *modus operandi* of public journals to deny the general falsity of impression conveyed. Let, in America, a book be published by an unknown, careless, or uninfluential author; if he publishes it "on his own account," he will be confounded at finding that no notice of it is taken at all. If it has been intrusted to a publisher of caste, there will appear forthwith in each of the leading business papers a variously phrased critique to the extent of three or four lines, and to the effect that "we have received, from the fertile press of So and So, a volume entitled This and That, which appears to be well worthy perusal, and which is 'got up' in the customary neat style of the enterprising firm of So and So." On the other hand, let our author have acquired influence, experience, or (what will stand him in good stead of either) effrontery, on the issue of his book he will obtain from his publisher a hundred copies (or more, as the case may be) "for distribution among friends connected with the press." Armed with these, he will call personally either at the office or (if he understands his game) at the private residence of every editor within his reach, enter into conversation, compliment the journalist, interest him, as if incidentally, in the subject of the book, and finally, watching an opportunity, beg leave to hand him "a volume which, quite opportunely, is on the very matter now under discussion." If the editor seems sufficiently interested, the rest is left to

fate; but if there is any lukewarmness (usually indicated by a polite regret on the editor's part that he really has "no time to render the work that justice which its importance demands"), then our author is prepared to understand and to sympathize; has, luckily, a friend thoroughly conversant with the topic, and who (perhaps) could be persuaded to write some account of the volume, provided that the editor would be kind enough just to glance over the critique and amend it in accordance with his own particular views. Glad to fill half a column or so of his editorial space, and still more glad to get rid of his visitor, the journalist assents. The author retires, consults the friend, instructs him touching the strong points of the volume and, insinuating in some shape a *quid pro quo*, gets an elaborate critique written (or, what is more usual and far more simple, writes it himself), and his business in this individual quarter is accomplished. Nothing more than sheer impudence is requisite to accomplish it in all.

Now the effect of this system (for it has really grown to be such) is obvious. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, men of genius, too indolent and careless about worldly concerns to bestir themselves after this fashion, have also that pride of intellect which would prevent them, under any circumstances, from even insinuating, by the presentation of a book to a member of the press, a desire to have that book reviewed. They, consequently, and their works, are utterly overwhelmed and extinguished in the flood of the *apparent* public adulation upon which in gilded barges are borne triumphant the ingenious toady and the diligent quack.

In general, the books of the toadies and quacks, not

being read at all, are safe from any contradiction of this self-bestowed praise; but now and then it happens that the excess of the laudation works out in part its own remedy. Men of leisure, hearing one of the toady works commended, look at it, read its preface and a few pages of its body, and throw it aside with disgust, wondering at the ill taste of the *editors* who extol it. But there is an iteration, and then a continuous reiteration of the panegyric, till these men of leisure begin to suspect themselves in the wrong, to fancy that there may really be something good lying *perdu* in the volume. In a fit of desperate curiosity they read it through critically, their indignation growing hotter at each succeeding page till it gets the better even of contempt. The result is, that reviews now appear in various quarters entirely at variance with the opinions so generally expressed, and which, but for these indignation reviews, would have passed universally current as the opinion of the public. It is in this manner that those gross seeming discrepancies arise which so often astonish us, but which vanish instantaneously in private society.

But although it may be said, in general, that Mr. Bryant's position is comparatively well settled, still for some time past there has been a growing tendency to underestimate him. The new licentious "schools" of poetry — I do not now speak of the transcendentalists, who are the merest nobodies, fatiguing even themselves, but the Tennysonian and Barrettian schools — having, in their rashness of spirit, much in accordance with the whole spirit of the age, thrown into the shade necessarily all that seems akin to the conservatism of half a century ago, — the conventionalities, even the most justifiable *decora* of composition,

are regarded, *per se*, with a suspicious eye. When I say *per se*, I mean that, from finding them so long in connection with conservatism of thought, we have come at last to dislike them, not merely as the outward visible signs of that conservatism, but as things evil in themselves. It is very clear that those accuracies and elegancies of style, and of general manner, which in the time of Pope were considered as *prima facie* and indispensable indications of genius, are now conversely regarded. How few are willing to admit the possibility of reconciling genius with artistic skill! Yet this reconciliation is not only possible, but an absolute necessity. It is a mere prejudice which has hitherto prevented the union, by studiously insisting upon a natural repulsion which not only does not exist but which is at war with all the analogies of nature. The greatest poems will not be written until this prejudice is annihilated; and I mean to express a very exalted opinion of Mr. Bryant when I say that his works in time to come will do much towards the annihilation.

I have never disbelieved in the perfect consistency, and even congeniality, of the highest genius and the profoundest art; but in the case of the author of "The Ages," I *have* fallen into the general error of undervaluing his poetic ability on account of the mere "elegancies and accuracies" to which allusion has already been made. I confess that, with an absolute abstraction from all personal feelings, and with the most sincere intention to do justice, I was at one period beguiled into this popular error; there can be no difficulty, therefore, on my part, in excusing the inadvertence in others.

It will never do to claim for Bryant a genius of the loftiest order, but there has been latterly, since the

days of Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell, a growing disposition to deny him genius in any respect. He is now commonly spoken of as "a man of high poetical talent, very 'correct,' with a warm appreciation of the beauty of nature and great descriptive powers, but rather too much of the old-school manner of Cowper, Goldsmith, and Young." This is the truth, but not the whole truth. Mr. Bryant has genius, and that of a marked character, but it has been overlooked by modern schools, because deficient in those externals which have become in a measure symbolical of those schools.

Dr. Griswold, in summing up his comments on Bryant, has the following significant objections: "His genius is not versatile; he has related no history; he has not sung of the passion of love; he has not described artificial life. Still the tenderness and feeling in 'The Death of the Flowers,' 'Rizpah,' 'The Indian Girl's Lament,' and other pieces, show that he might have excelled in delineations of the gentler passions, had he made them his study."

Now, in describing *no* artificial life, in relating *no* history, in *not* singing the passion of love, the poet has merely shown himself the profound artist, has merely evinced a proper consciousness that such are not the legitimate themes of poetry. That they are not, I have repeatedly shown, or attempted to show; and to go over the demonstration now would be foreign to the gossiping and desultory nature of the present article. What Dr. Griswold means by "the gentler passions" is, I presume, not very clear to himself; but it is possible that he employs the phrase in consequence of the gentle, unpassionate emotion induced by the poems of which he quotes the titles.

It is precisely this "unpassionate emotion" which is the limit of the true poetical art. Passion proper and poesy are discordant. Poetry, in elevating, tranquillizes *the soul*. With *the heart* it has nothing to do. For a fuller explanation of these views I refer the reader to an analysis of a poem by Mrs. Welby — an analysis contained in an article called "Marginalia," and published about a year ago in the "Democratic Review."

The editor of "The Poets and Poetry of America" thinks the literary precocity of Bryant remarkable. "There are few recorded more remarkable," he says. The first edition of "The Embargo" was in 1808, and the poet was born in 1794; he was more than thirteen, then, when the satire was printed, although it is reported to have been written a year earlier. I quote a few lines: —

> "Oh, might some patriot rise, the gloom dispel,
> Chase Error's mist and break the magic spell!
> But vain the wish; for, hark! the murmuring meed
> Of hoarse applause from yonder shed proceed.
> Enter and view the thronging concourse there,
> Intent with gaping mouth and stupid stare;
> While in the midst their supple leader stands,
> Harangues aloud, and flourishes his hands,
> To adulation tunes his servile throat,
> And sues successful for each blockhead's vote."

This is a fair specimen of the whole, both as regards its satirical and rhythmical power. A satire is, of course, no *poem*. I have known boys of an earlier age do better things, although the case is rare. All depends upon the course of education. Bryant's father "was familiar with the best English literature, and perceiving in his son indications of superior

genius, attended carefully to his instruction, taught him the art of composition, and guided his literary taste." This being understood, the marvel of such verse as I have quoted ceases at once, even admitting it to be thoroughly the boy's own work; but it is difficult to make any such admission. The father *must* have suggested, revised, retouched.

The longest poem of Bryant is "The Ages" — thirty-five Spenserian stanzas. It is the one improper theme of its author. The design is, "from a survey of the past ages of the world, and of the successive advances of mankind in knowledge and virtue, to justify and confirm the hopes of the philanthropist for the future destinies of the human race." All this would have been more rationally, because more effectually, accomplished in prose. Dismissing it as a poem (which in its general tendency it is not), one might commend the force of its argumentation but for the radical error of deducing a hope of progression from the cycles of physical nature.

The sixth stanza is a specimen of noble versification (within the narrow limits of the iambic pentameter):

> "Look on this beautiful world, and read the truth
> In her fair page; see, every season brings
> New change to her of everlasting youth;
> Still the green soil with joyous living things
> Swarms; the wide air is full of joyous wings;
> And myriads still are happy in the sleep
> Of Ocean's azure gulfs, and where he flings
> The restless surge. Eternal Love doth keep
> In his complacent arms, the earth, the air, the deep."

The cadences here at "page," "swarms," and "surge," cannot be surpassed. There are comparatively few consonants. Liquids and the softer vowels

abound, and the partial line after the pause at "surge," with the stately march of the succeeding Alexandrine, is one of the finest conceivable *finales*.

The poem, in general, has unity, completeness. Its tone, of calm, elevated and hopeful contemplation, is well sustained throughout. There is an occasional quaint grace of expression, as in

> "Nurse of full streams, and lifter-up of proud
> Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud!"

or of antithetical and rhythmical force combined, as in

> "The shock that hurled
> To dust, in many fragments dashed and strown,
> The throne whose roots were in another world,
> And whose far-stretching shadow awed our own."

But we look in vain for anything more worthy commendation.

"Thanatopsis" is the poem by which its author is best known, but is by no means his best poem. It owes the extent of its celebrity to its nearly absolute freedom from defect, in the ordinary understanding of the term. I mean to say that its negative merit recommends it to the public attention. It is a thoughtful, well-phrased, well-constructed, well-versified poem. The concluding thought is exceedingly noble, and has done wonders for the success of the whole composition.

"The Waterfowl" is very beautiful, but like "Thanatopsis" owes a great deal to its completeness and pointed termination.

"Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids!" will strike every poet as the truest poem written by Bryant. It is richly ideal.

"June" is sweet, and perfectly well modulated in

its rhythm, and inexpressibly pathetic. It serves well to illustrate my previous remarks about passion in its connection with poetry. In "June" there is, very properly, nothing of the intense *passion* of grief; but the subdued sorrow which comes up, as if perforce, to the surface of the poet's gay sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is yet a spiritual *elevation* in the thrill: —

"And what if cheerful shouts at noon
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

"I know that I no more should see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if, around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go;
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb."

The thoughts here belong to the highest class of poetry, the imaginative-natural, and are of themselves sufficient to stamp their author a man of genius.

I copy at random a few passages of similar cast, inducing a similar conviction: —

"The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love, —
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,
Than that which bends above our eastern hills."

"Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and wooed
In a forgotten language, and *old tunes*
From instruments of unremembered form
Gave the soft winds a voice."

"Breezes of the South!
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie hawk that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not."

"On the breast of Earth
I lie, and listen to her mighty voice:
A voice of many tones — sent up from streams
That wander through the gloom, from woods unseen
Swayed by the sweeping of the tides of air;
From rocky chasms where darkness dwells all day,
And hollows of the great invisible hills,
And sands that edge the ocean, stretching far
Into the night — a melancholy sound!"

"All the green herbs
Are stirring in his breath; *a thousand flowers*
By the road side and the borders of the brook,
Nod gayly to each other."

There is a fine "echo of sound to sense" in "the borders of the brook," etc.; and in the same poem from which these lines are taken, "The Summer Wind," may be found two other equally happy examples: —

"For me, I lie
Languidly in the shade, where the thick turf,
Yet virgin from the kisses of the sun,
Retains some freshness."

And again: —

"All is silent, save the faint
And interrupted murmur of the bee
Settling on the sick flowers, and then again
Instantly on the wing."

I resume the imaginative extracts: —

"Paths, homes, graves, ruins from the lowest glen
To where life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air."

"*And the blue gentian flower that in the breeze*
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last."

"*A shoot of that old vine that made*
The nations silent in the shade."

"*But 'neath yon crimson tree,*
Lover to listening maid might breathe his flame,
Nor mark, within its roseate canopy,
Her flush of maiden shame."

"The mountains that infold,
In their wild sweep, the colored landscape round,
Seem *groups of giant kings in purple and gold*
That guard the enchanted ground."

This latter passage is especially beautiful. Happily to endow inanimate nature with sentience and a capability of action is one of the severest tests of the poet.

"There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along *that pathless coast* —
The desert and illimitable air —
Lone wandering, but not lost."

"Pleasant shall be thy way *where meekly bows*
The shutting flower, and darkling waters pass,
And where the o'ershadowing branches sweep the grass."

"Sweet odors in the sea air, sweet and strange,
Shall tell the home-sick mariner of the shore,
And, listening to thy murmur, he shall deem
He hears the rustling leaf and running stream."

In a "Sonnet, To ——," are some richly imaginative lines. I quote the whole: —

"Ay, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too brightly to shine long; another Spring
Shall deck her for men's eyes, but not for thine,
Sealed in a sleep which knows no wakening.

The fields for thee have no medicinal leaf,
And the vexed ore no mineral of power;
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief
Till the slow plague shall bring the fatal hour.
Glide softly to thy rest, then: death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee,
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom,
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree.
Close thy sweet eyes, calmly, and without pain,
And we will trust in God to see thee yet again."

The happiest *finale* to these brief extracts will be the magnificent conclusion of "Thanatopsis."

"So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

In the minor morals of the Muse, Mr. Bryant excels. In versification (as far as he goes) he is unsurpassed in America — unless, indeed, by Mr. Sprague. Mr. Longfellow is not so thorough a versifier, within Mr. Bryant's limits, but a far better one upon the whole, on account of his greater range. Mr. Bryant, however, is by no means always accurate — or defensible, for accurate is not the term. His lines are occasionally unpronounceable through excess of harsh consonants, as in

"As if they loved to breast the breeze that sweeps the cool clear sky."

Now and then he gets out of his depth in attempting anapæstic rhythm, of which he makes sad havoc, as in

"And Rizpah, once the loveliest of all
That bloomed and smiled in the court of Saul."

Not unfrequently, too, even his pentameters are inexcusably rough, as in

"Kind influence. Lo! their orbs burn more bright,"

which can only be read metrically by drawing out "influence" into three marked syllables, shortening the long monosyllable "Lo!" and lengthening the short one "their."

Mr. Bryant is not devoid of mannerisms, one of the most noticeable of which is his use of the epithet "old" preceded by some other adjective, *e. g.*: —

"In all that proud old world beyond the deep;"
"There is a tale about these gray old rocks;"
"The wide old woods resounded with her song;"
"And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven,"

etc., etc., etc. These duplicates occur so frequently as to excite a smile upon each repetition.

Of merely grammatical errors the poet is rarely guilty. Faulty constructions are more frequently chargeable to him. In "The Massacre of Scio" we read

"Till the last link of slavery's chain
Is shattered, to be worn no more."

What shall be worn no more? The chain, of course — but the link is implied. It will be understood that I pick these flaws only with difficulty from the poems of Bryant. He is, in the "minor morals," the most generally correct of our poets.

He is now fifty-two years of age. In height, he is, perhaps, five feet nine. His frame is rather robust. His features are large but thin. His countenance is

sallow, nearly bloodless. His eyes are piercing gray, deep set, with large projecting eyebrows. His mouth is wide and massive, the expression of the smile hard, cold — even sardonic. The forehead is broad, with prominent organs of ideality; a good deal bald; the hair thin and grayish, as are also the whiskers, which he wears in a simple style. His bearing is quite distinguished, full of the aristocracy of intellect. In general, he looks in better health than before his last visit to England. He seems active — physically and morally energetic. His dress is plain to the extreme of simplicity, although of late there is a certain degree of Anglicism about it.

In character no man stands more loftily than Bryant. The peculiarly melancholy expression of his countenance has caused him to be accused of harshness, or coldness of heart. Never was there a greater mistake. His soul is charity itself, in all respects generous and noble. His manners are undoubtedly reserved.

Of late days he has nearly, if not altogether, abandoned literary pursuits, although still editing with unabated vigor the New York "Evening Post." He is married (Mrs. Bryant still living), has two daughters (one of them Mrs. Parke Godwin), and is residing for the present at Vice-Chancellor McCown's, near the junction of Warren and Church streets.

LONGFELLOW'S BALLADS

"*Il y a à parier*," says Chamfort, "*que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenu au plus grand nombre*," — "One would be safe in wagering that any given public idea is erroneous, for it has been yielded to the clamor of the majority;" and this strictly philosophical, although somewhat French, assertion has especial bearing upon the whole race of what are termed maxims and popular proverbs, nine-tenths of which are the quintessence of folly. One of the most deplorably false of them is the antique adage, "*De gustibus non est disputandum*" — "There should be no disputing about taste." Here the idea designed to be conveyed is that any one person has as just right to consider his own taste *the true*, as has any one other — that taste itself, in short, is an arbitrary something, amenable to no law, and measurable by no definite rules. It must be confessed, however, that the exceedingly vague and impotent treatises which are alone extant have much to answer for as regards confirming the general error. Not the least important service which, hereafter, mankind will owe to *Phrenology*, may, perhaps, be recognized in an analysis of the real principles and a digest of the resulting laws of taste. These principles, in fact, are as clearly traceable, and these laws as readily susceptible of system, as are any whatever.

In the mean time, the insane adage above mentioned is in no respect more generally, more stupidly, and more pertinaciously quoted than by the admirers of what is termed the "good old Pope" or the "good old Goldsmith school" of poetry, in reference to the bolder, more natural, and more ideal compositions of such authors as Coëtlogon and Lamartine[1] in France; Herder, Körner, and Uhland in Germany; Brun and Baggesen in Denmark; Bellman, Tegner, and Nyberg[2] in Sweden; Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Tennyson in England; Lowell and Longfellow in America. "*De gustibus non*," say these "good-old-school" fellows; and we have no doubt that their mental translation of the phrase is — "We pity your taste — we pity everybody's taste but our own."

It is our purpose to controvert the popular idea that the poets just mentioned owe to novelty, to trickeries of expression, and to other meretricious effects, their appreciation by certain readers; to demonstrate (for the matter is susceptible of demonstration) that such poetry, and *such alone*, has fulfilled the legitimate office of the Muse; has thoroughly satisfied an earnest and unquenchable desire existing in the heart of man.

This volume of "Ballads and Tales" includes, with several brief original pieces, a translation from the Swedish of Tegner. In attempting (what never should be attempted) a literal version of both the words and the metre of this poem, Professor Longfellow has failed to do justice either to his author or himself. He has striven to do what no man ever did well, and what, from the nature of language itself, never can be

[1] We allude here chiefly to the *David* of Coëtlogon, and *only* to the *Chûte d'un Ange* of Lamartine.

[2] Julia C. Nyberg, author of the *Dikter af Euphrosyne*.

well done. Unless, for example, we shall come to have an influx of spondees in our English tongue, it will always be impossible to construct an English hexameter. Our spondees, or, we should say, our spondaic words, are rare. In the Swedish they are nearly as abundant as in the Latin and Greek. We have only "compound," "context," "footfall," and a few other similar ones. This is the difficulty; and that it is so will become evident upon reading "The Children of the Lord's Supper," where the sole readable verses are those in which we meet with the rare spondaic dissyllables. We mean to say readable as hexameters; for many of them will read very well as mere English dactylics with certain irregularities.

Much as we admire the genius of Mr. Longfellow, we are fully sensible of his many errors of affectation and imitation. His artistical skill is great, and his ideality high. But his conception of the aims of poesy is all wrong; and this we shall prove at some future day, to our own satisfaction, at least. His didactics are all out of place. He has written brilliant poems, by accident; that is to say, when permitting his genius to get the better of his conventional habit of thinking, a habit deduced from German study. We do not mean to say that a didactic moral may not be well made the under-current of a poetical thesis; but that it can never be well put so obtrusively forth, as in the majority of his compositions.

We have said that Mr. Longfellow's conception of the aims of poesy is erroneous; and that thus, laboring at a disadvantage, he does violent wrong to his own high powers; and now the question is, what are his ideas of the aims of the Muse, as we gather these ideas from the general tendency of his poems? It

will be at once evident that, imbued with the peculiar spirit of German song (in pure conventionality), he regards the inculcation of a moral as essential. Here we find it necessary to repeat that we have reference only to the general tendency of his compositions; for there are some magnificent exceptions, where, as if by accident, he has permitted his genius to get the better of his conventional prejudice. But didacticism is the prevalent tone of his song. His invention, his imagery, his all, is made subservient to the elucidation of some one or more points (but rarely of more than one) which he looks upon as truth. And that this mode of procedure will find stern defenders should never excite surprise, so long as the world is full to overflowing with cant and conventicles. There are men who will scramble on all fours through the muddiest sloughs of vice to pick up a single apple of virtue. There are things called men who, so long as the sun rolls, will greet with snuffling huzzas every figure that takes upon itself the semblance of truth, even although the figure, in itself only a "stuffed Paddy," be as much out of place as a toga on the statue of Washington, or out of season as rabbits in the days of the dog-star.

We say this with little fear of contradiction. Yet the spirit of our assertion must be more heeded than the letter. Mankind have seemed to define Poesy in a thousand, and in a thousand conflicting, definitions. But the war is one only of words. Induction is as well applicable to this subject as to the most palpable and utilitarian; and by its sober processes we find that, in respect to compositions which have been really received as poems, the imaginative, or, more popularly, the creative portions alone have

insured them to be so received. Yet these works, on account of these portions, having once been so received and so named, it has happened, naturally and inevitably, that other portions totally unpoetic have not only come to be regarded by the popular voice as poetic, but have been made to serve as false standards of perfection, in the adjustment of other poetical claims. Whatever has been found in whatever has been received as a poem has been blindly regarded as *ex statu* poetic. And this is a species of gross error which scarcely could have made its way into any less intangible topic. In fact, that license, which appertains to the Muse herself, it has been thought decorous, if not sagacious, to indulge, in all examination of her character.

Poesy is a response — unsatisfactory, it is true — but still in some measure a response, to a natural and irrepressible demand. Man being what he is, the time could never have been in which Poesy was not. Its first element is the thirst for supernal BEAUTY — a beauty which is not afforded the soul by any existing collocation of earth's forms — a beauty which, perhaps, no possible combination of these forms would fully produce. Its second element is the attempt to satisfy this thirst by novel combinations among those forms of beauty which already exist — or by novel combinations *of those combinations which our predecessors, toiling in chase of the same phantom, have already set in order.* We thus clearly deduce the *novelty*, the *originality*, the *invention*, the *imagination*, or lastly the *creation* of BEAUTY (for the terms as here employed are synonymous), as the essence of all Poesy. Nor is this idea so much at variance with ordinary opinion as, at first sight, it may

appear. A multitude of antique dogmas on this topic will be found, when divested of extrinsic speculation, to be easily resoluble into the definition now proposed. We do nothing more than present tangibly the vague clouds of the world's idea. We recognize the idea itself floating, unsettled, indefinite, in every attempt which has yet been made to circumscribe the conception of "Poesy" in words. A striking instance of this is observable in the fact that no definition exists, in which either "the beautiful," or some one of those qualities which we have above designated synonymously with "creation," has not been pointed out as the chief attribute of the Muse. "Invention," however, or "imagination," is by far more commonly insisted upon. The word ποιῆσις itself (creation) speaks volumes upon this point. Neither will it be amiss here to mention Count Bielfeld's definition of poetry as "*L'art d'exprimer les pensées par la fiction.*" With this definition (of which the philosophy is profound to a certain extent) the German terms *Dichtkunst*, the art of fiction, and *dichten*, to feign, which are used for "poetry" and "to make verses," are in full and remarkable accordance. It is, nevertheless, in the combination of the two omni-prevalent ideas that the novelty, and, we believe, the force of our own proposition is to be found.

The elements of that beauty which is felt in sound may be the mutual or common heritage of Earth and Heaven. Contenting ourselves with the firm conviction that music (in its modifications of rhythm and rhyme) is of so vast a moment to Poesy as never to be neglected by him who is truly poetical — is of so mighty a force in furthering the great aim intended

that he is mad who rejects its assistance — content with this idea, we shall not pause to maintain its absolute essentiality for the mere sake of rounding a definition. That our definition of poetry will necessarily exclude much of what, through a supine toleration, has been hitherto ranked as poetical, is a matter which affords us not even momentary concern. We address but the thoughtful, and heed only their approval — with our own. If our suggestions are truthful, then "after many days" shall they be understood as truth, even though found in contradiction of all that has been hitherto so understood. If false, shall we not be the first to bid them die?

We would reject, of course, all such matters as Armstrong on "Health," a revolting production; Pope's "Essay on Man," which may well be content with the title of an "Essay in Rhyme;" "Hudibras," and other merely humorous pieces. We do not gainsay the peculiar merits of either of these latter compositions, but deny them the position held. In a notice of Brainard's poems, we took occasion to show that the common use of a certain instrument (rhythm) had tended, more than aught else, to confound humorous verse with poetry. The observation is now recalled to corroborate what we have just said in respect to the vast effect or force of melody in itself — an effect which could elevate into even momentary confusion with the highest efforts of mind compositions such as are the greater number of satires or burlesques.

We have shown our ground of objection to the general themes of Professor Longfellow. In common with all who claim the sacred title of poet, he should limit his endeavors to the creation of novel moods of

beauty, in form, in color, in sound, in sentiment; for over all this wide range has the poetry of words dominion. To what the world terms "prose" may be safely and properly left all else. The artist who doubts of his thesis may always resolve his doubt by the single question — "might not this matter be as well or better handled in prose?" If it may, then is it no subject for the Muse. In the general acceptation of the term "Beauty" we are content to rest; being careful only to suggest that, in our peculiar views, it must be understood as inclusive of the sublime.

Of the pieces which constitute the present volume, there are not more than one or two thoroughly fulfilling the ideas we have proposed; although the volume, as a whole, is by no means so chargeable with didacticism as Mr. Longfellow's previous book. We would mention as poems nearly true, "The Village Blacksmith," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and especially "The Skeleton in Armor." In the first-mentioned we have the beauty of simple-mindedness as a genuine thesis; and this thesis is inimitably handled until the concluding stanza, where the spirit of legitimate poesy is aggrieved in the pointed antithetical deduction of a moral from what has gone before. In "The Wreck of the Hesperus" we have the beauty of child-like confidence and innocence, with that of the father's stern courage and affection. But, with slight exception, those particulars of the storm here detailed are not poetic subjects. Their thrilling horror belongs to prose, in which it could be far more effectively discussed, as Professor Longfellow may assure himself at any moment by experiment. There are points of a tempest which afford the loftiest and truest poetical themes — points in which pure beauty is found, or,

better still, beauty heightened into the sublime by terror. But when we read, among other similar things, that

> "The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
> The salt tears in her eyes,"

we feel, if not positive disgust, at least a chilling sense of the inappropriate. In "The Skeleton in Armor" we find a pure and perfect thesis artistically treated. We find the beauty of bold courage and self-confidence, of love and maiden devotion, of reckless adventure, and finally of life-contemning grief. Combined with all this, we have numerous points of beauty apparently insulated, but all aiding the main effect or impression. The heart is stirred, and the mind does not lament its mal-instruction. The metre is simple, sonorous, well-balanced, and fully adapted to the subject. Upon the whole, there are fewer truer poems than this. It has but one defect — an important one. The prose remarks prefacing the narrative are really necessary. But every work of art should contain within itself all that is requisite for its own comprehension. And this remark is especially true of the ballad. In poems of magnitude the mind of the reader is not, at all times, enabled to include, in one comprehensive survey, the proportions and proper adjustment of the whole. He is pleased, if at all, with particular passages; and the sum of his pleasure is compounded of the sums of the pleasurable sentiments inspired by these individual passages in the progress of perusal. But, in pieces of less extent, the pleasure is unique, in the proper acceptation of this term — the understanding is employed, without difficulty, in the contemplation of the picture as a whole;

and thus its effect will depend, in great measure, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptation of its constituent parts, and especially, upon what is rightly termed by Schlegel *the unity or totality of interest.* But the practice of prefixing explanatory passages is utterly at variance with such unity. By the prefix, we are either put in possession of the subject of the poem, or some hint, historic fact, or suggestion, is thereby afforded, not included in the body of the piece, which, without the hint, is incomprehensible. In the latter case, while perusing the poem, the reader must revert, in mind at least, to the prefix, for the necessary explanation. In the former, the poem being a mere paraphrase of the prefix, the interest is divided between the prefix and the paraphrase. In either instance the totality of effect is destroyed.

Of the other original poems in the volume before us, there is none in which the aim of instruction, or truth, has not been too obviously substituted for the legitimate aim, beauty. We have heretofore taken occasion to say that a didactic moral might be happily made the under-current of a poetical theme, and we have treated this point at length, in a review of Moore's "Alciphron;" but the moral thus conveyed is invariably an ill effect when obtruding beyond the upper-current of the thesis itself. Perhaps the worst specimen of this obtrusion is given us by our poet in "Blind Bartimeus" and "The Goblet of Life," where it will be observed that the sole interest of the upper-current of meaning depends upon its relation or reference to the under. What we read upon the surface would be *vox et præterea nihil* in default of the moral beneath. The Greek *finales* of "Blind Bartimeus" are an affectation altogether inexcusable. What the

small, second-hand Gibbonish pedantry of Byron introduced is unworthy the imitation of Longfellow.

Of the translations we scarcely think it necessary to speak at all. We regret that our poet will persist in busying himself about such matters. His time might be better employed in original conception. Most of these versions are marked with the error upon which we have commented. This error is, in fact, essentially Germanic. "The Luck of Edenhall," however, is a truly beautiful poem; and we say this with all that deference which the opinion of the "Democratic Review" demands. This composition appears to us one of the very finest. It has all the free, hearty, obvious movement of the true ballad-legend. The greatest force of language is combined in it with the richest imagination, acting in its most legitimate province. Upon the whole, we prefer it even to the "Sword-Song" of Körner. The pointed moral with which it terminates is so exceedingly natural, so perfectly fluent from the incidents, that we have hardly heart to pronounce it in ill taste. We may observe of this ballad, in conclusion, that its subject is more physical than is usual in Germany. Its images are rich rather in physical than in moral beauty. And this tendency, in Song, is the true one. It is chiefly, if we are not mistaken — it is chiefly amid forms of physical loveliness (we use the word *forms* in its widest sense as embracing modifications of sound and color) that the soul seeks the realization of its dreams of BEAUTY. It is to her demand in this sense especially, that the poet, who is wise, will most frequently and most earnestly respond.

"The Children of the Lord's Supper" is, beyond doubt, a true and most beautiful poem in great part,

while, in some particulars, it is too metaphysical to have any pretension to the name. We have already objected, briefly, to its metre — the ordinary Latin or Greek hexameter — dactyls and spondees at random, with a spondee in conclusion. We maintain that the hexameter can never be introduced into our language, from the nature of that language itself. This rhythm demands, *for English ears*, a preponderance of natural spondees. Our tongue has few. Not only does the Latin and Greek, with the Swedish, and some others, abound in them; but the Greek and Roman ear had become reconciled (why or how is unknown) to the reception of artificial spondees — that is to say, spondaic words formed partly of one word and partly of another, or from an excised part of one word. In short, the ancients were content to read *as they scanned*, or nearly so. It may be safely prophesied that we shall never do this; and thus we shall never admit English hexameters. The attempt to introduce them, after the repeated failures of Sir Philip Sidney, and others, is, perhaps, somewhat discreditable to the scholarship of Professor Longfellow. The "Democratic Review," in saying that he has triumphed over difficulties in this rhythm, has been deceived, it is evident, by the facility with which some of these verses may be read. In glancing over the poem, we do not observe a single verse which can be read, *to English ears, as a Greek hexameter*. There are many, however, which can be well read as mere English dactylic verses; such, for example, as the well-known lines of Byron, commencing

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle.

These lines (although full of irregularities) are, in their perfection, formed of three dactyls and a cæsura

— just as if we should cut short the initial verse of the Bucolics thus —

Tityre | tu patu | læ recu | bans —

The "myrtle," at the close of Byron's line, is a double rhyme, and must be understood as one syllable.

Now a great number of Professor Longfellow's hexameters are merely these dactylic lines, *continued for two feet*. For example —

Whispered the | race of the | flowers and | merry on | balancing | branches.

In this example, also, "branches," which is a double ending, must be regarded as the cæsura, or one syllable, of which alone it has the force.

As we have already alluded, in one or two regards, to a notice of these poems which appeared in the "Democratic Review," we may as well here proceed with some few further comments upon the article in question, with whose general tenor we are happy to agree.

The "Review" speaks of "Maidenhood" as a poem "not to be understood but at the expense of more time and trouble than a song can justly claim." We are scarcely less surprised at this opinion from Mr. Langtree than we were at the condemnation of "The Luck of Edenhall."

"Maidenhood" is faulty, it appears to us, only on the score of its theme, which is somewhat didactic. Its meaning seems simplicity itself. A maiden on the verge of womanhood, hesitating to enjoy life (for which she has a strong appetite) through a false idea of duty, is bidden to fear nothing, having purity of heart as her lion of Una.

What Mr. Langtree styles "an unfortunate pecu-

ſiarity" in Mr. Longfellow, resulting from "adherence to a false system," has really been always regarded by us as one of his idiosyncratic merits. "In each poem," says the critic, "he has but one idea, which, in the progress of his song, is gradually unfolded, and at last reaches its full development in the concluding lines; this singleness of thought might lead a harsh critic to suspect intellectual barrenness." It leads *us*, individually, only to a full sense of the artistical power and knowledge of the poet. We confess that now, for the first time, we hear unity of conception objected to as a defect. But Mr. Langtree seems to have fallen into the singular error of supposing the poet to have absolutely *but one idea* in each of his ballads. Yet how "one idea" can be "gradually unfolded" without other ideas, is, to us, a mystery of mysteries. Mr. Longfellow, very properly, has but one leading idea which forms the basis of his poem; but to the aid and development of this one there are innumerable others, of which the rare excellence is, that all are in keeping, that none could be well omitted, that each tends to the one general effect. It is unnecessary to say another word upon this topic.

In speaking of "Excelsior," Mr. Langtree (are we wrong in attributing the notice to his very forcible pen?) seems to labor under some similar misconception. "It carries along with it," says he, "a false moral which greatly diminishes its merit in our eyes. The great merit of a picture, whether made with the pencil or pen, is its truth; and this merit does not belong to Mr. Longfellow's sketch. Men of genius may, and probably do, meet with greater difficulties in their struggles with the world than their fellow-men who are less highly gifted; but their power of over-

coming obstacles is proportionably greater, and the result of their laborious suffering is not death but immortality."

That the chief merit of a picture is its truth is an assertion deplorably erroneous. Even in Painting, which is, more essentially than Poetry, a mimetic art, the proposition cannot be sustained. Truth is not even the aim. Indeed it is curious to observe how very slight a degree of truth is sufficient to satisfy the mind, which acquiesces in the absence of numerous essentials in the thing depicted. An outline frequently stirs the spirit more pleasantly than the most elaborate picture. We need only refer to the compositions of Flaxman and of Retzch. Here all details are omitted — nothing can be farther from truth. Without even color the most thrilling effects are produced. In statues we are rather pleased than disgusted with *the want of the eyeball.* The hair of the Venus de Medici *was gilded.* Truth indeed! The grapes of Zeuxis as well as the curtain of Parrhasius were received as indisputable evidence of the truthful ability of these artists — but they were not even *classed among their pictures.* If truth is the highest aim of either Painting or Poesy, then Jan Steen was a greater artist than Angelo, and Crabbe is a more noble poet than Milton.

But we have not quoted the observation of Mr. Langtree to deny its philosophy; our design was simply to show that he has misunderstood the poet. "Excelsior" has not even a remote tendency to the interpretation assigned it by the critic. It depicts the *earnest upward impulse of the soul* — an impulse not to be subdued even in Death. Despising danger, resisting pleasure, the youth, bearing the banner inscribed "*Excelsior!*" ("higher still!") struggles

through all difficulties to an Alpine summit. Warned to be content with the elevation attained, his cry is still "*Excelsior!*" and, even in falling dead on the highest pinnacle, his cry is *still* "*Excelsior!*" There is yet an immortal height to be surmounted — an ascent in Eternity. The poet holds in view the idea of never-ending progress. That he is misunderstood is rather the misfortune of Mr. Langtree than the fault of Mr. Longfellow. There is an old adage about the difficulty of one's furnishing an auditor both with matter to be comprehended and brains for its comprehension.

A REPLY TO "OUTIS"

I

FOR the "Evening Mirror" of January 14 (1845), before my editorial connection with the "Broadway Journal," I furnished a brief criticism on Professor Longfellow's "Waif." In the course of my observations, I collated a poem called "*The* Death-Bed," and written by Hood, with one by Mr. Aldrich, entitled "*A* Death-Bed." The criticism ended thus: —

"We conclude our notes on the 'Waif,' with the observation that, although full of beauties, it is infected with a *moral taint* — or is this a mere freak of our own fancy? We shall be pleased if it be so; but there *does* appear, in this little volume, a very careful avoidance of all American poets who may be supposed especially to interfere with the claims of Mr. Longfellow. These men Mr. Longfellow can continuously *imitate* (*is* that the word?) and yet never even incidentally commend."

Much discussion ensued. A friend of Mr. Longfellow's penned a defence, which had at least the merit of being thoroughly impartial; for it defended Mr. Longfellow, not only from the one-tenth of very moderate disapproval in which I had indulged, but from the nine-tenths of my enthusiastic admiration into the bargain. The fact is, if I was not convinced that in ninety-nine hundredths of all that I had written about Mr. Longfellow I was decidedly in the wrong, at least it was no fault of Mr. Longfellow's

very luminous friend. This well-intended defence was published in the "Mirror," with a few words of preface by Mr. Willis, and of postscript by myself. Still dissatisfied, Mr. Longfellow, through a second friend, addressed to Mr. Willis an expostulatory letter, of which the "Mirror" printed only the following portion: —

"It has been asked, perhaps, why Lowell was neglected in this collection? Might it not as well be asked why Bryant, Dana, and Halleck were neglected? The answer is obvious to any one who candidly considers the character of the collection. It professed to be, according to the 'Proem,' from the humbler poets; and it was intended to embrace pieces that were anonymous, or which were not easily accessible to the general reader — the *waifs* and *estrays* of literature. To put anything of Lowell's, for example, into a collection of *waifs* would be a particular liberty with pieces which are all collected and christened."

Not yet content, or misunderstanding the tenor of some of the wittily put comments which accompanied the quotation, the aggrieved poet, through one of the two friends as before, or perhaps through a third, finally prevailed on the good-nature of Mr. Willis to publish an explicit declaration of his disagreement with "*all* the disparagement of Longfellow" which had appeared in the criticism in question.

Now when we consider that many of the points of censure made by me in this critique were absolutely as plain as the nose upon Mr. Longfellow's face — that it was impossible to gainsay them — that we defied him and his coadjutors to say a syllable in reply to them — and that they held their tongues and not a syllable said — when we consider all this, I say, then the satire of the "*all*" in Mr. Willis's manifesto

becomes apparent at once. Mr. Longfellow did not see it; and I presume his friends did not see it. I did. In my mind's eye it expanded itself thus: "My dear Sir, or Sirs, what will you have? You are an insatiable set of cormorants, it is true: but if you will only let me know what you desire, I will satisfy you, if I die for it. Be quick! — merely say what it is you wish me to admit, and (for the sake of getting rid of you) I will admit it upon the spot. Come! I will grant at once that Mr. Longfellow is Jupiter Tonans, and that his three friends are the Graces, or the Furies, whichever you please. As for a fault to be found with either of you, *that* is impossible, and I say so. I disagree with *all* — with every syllable of the disparagement that ever has been whispered against you up to this date, and (not to stand upon trifles) with all that ever *shall* be whispered against you henceforward, forever and forever. May I hope at length that these assurances will be sufficient?" But if Mr. Willis really hoped anything of the kind he was mistaken.

In the mean time, Mr. Briggs, in the "Broadway Journal," did me the honor of taking me to task for what he supposed to be my insinuations against Mr. Aldrich. My reply (in the "Mirror"), prefaced by a few words from Mr. Willis, ran as follows: —

"Much interest has been given in our literary circles of late to the topic of plagiarism. About a month ago a very eminent critic, connected with this paper, took occasion to point out a parallelism between certain lines of Thomas Hood and certain others which appeared in the collection of American poetry edited by Mr. Griswold. Transcribing the passages, he ventured the assertion that '*somebody* is a thief.' The matter had been nearly forgotten, if

not altogether so, when a 'good-natured friend' of the American author (whose name had by us never been mentioned) considered it advisable to re-collate the passages, with the view of convincing the public (and himself) that no plagiarism is chargeable to the party of whom he thinks it chivalrous to be the 'good-natured friend.' For our own part, should *we* ever be guilty of an indiscretion of this kind, we deprecate all aid from our 'good-natured friends;' but in the mean time it is rendered necessary that once again we give publicity to the collation of poems in question. Mr. Hood's lines run thus:—

"'We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

"'So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

"'Our very hopes belied our fears;
Our fears our hopes belied;
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

"'For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed;—she had
Another morn than ours.'

"Mr. Aldrich's thus:—

"'Her suffering ended with the day,
Yet lived she at its close,
And breathed the long, long night away
In statue-like repose;

"'But when the sun in all his state
Illumed the eastern skies,
She passed through Glory's morning gate,
And walked in paradise.'

"And here, to be sure, we might well leave a decision in the case to the verdict of common-sense. But since the 'Broadway Journal' insists upon the 'no resemblance,' we are constrained to point out especially where our supposed similarity lies. In the first place, then, the subject in both pieces is *death*. In the second, it is the death of a woman. In the third, it is the death of a woman *tranquilly* dying. In the fourth, it is the death of a woman who lies tranquilly *throughout the night*. In the fifth, it is the death of a woman whose '*breathing* soft and low is watched through the night,' in the one instance, and who '*breathed* the long, long night away in statue-like repose' in the other. In the sixth place, in both poems this woman dies just at daybreak. In the seventh place, dying just at daybreak, this woman, in both cases, steps directly into Paradise. In the eighth place, all these identities of circumstance are related in identical rhythms. In the ninth place, these identical rhythms are arranged in identical metres; and, in the tenth place, these identical rhythms and metres are constructed into identical stanzas."

At this point the matter rested for a fortnight, when a fourth friend of Mr. Longfellow took up the cudgels for him and Mr. Aldrich conjointly, in another communication to the "Mirror." I copy it in full: —

"PLAGIARISM. — *Dear Willis*, — Fair play is a jewel, and I hope you will let us have it. I have been much amused by some of the efforts of your critical friend to convict Longfellow of imitation, and Aldrich and others of plagiarism. What *is* plagiarism? And what constitutes a good ground for the charge? Did no two men ever think alike without stealing one from the other? or, thinking alike, did no two men ever use the same, or similar words, to convey the thoughts, and that, without any communication with each other? To deny it would be absurd. It is a thing of every-day occurrence. Some years ago, a letter was written from some part of New England, describing

one of those scenes, not very common during what is called 'the January thaw,' when the snow, mingled with rain, and freezing as it falls, forms a perfect covering of ice upon every object. The storm clears away suddenly, and the moon comes up. The letter proceeds — '*every tree and shrub, as far as the eye can reach, of pure transparent glass — a perfect garden of moving, waving, breathing crystals. . . . Every tree is a diamond chandelier, with a whole constellation of stars clustering to every socket,*' etc. This letter was laid away where such things usually are, in a private drawer, and did not see the light for many years. But the very next autumn brought out, among the splendid annuals got up in the country, a beautiful poem from Whittier, describing the same, or rather a similar scene, in which the line

'The trees, like crystal chandeliers,'

was put in italics by every reviewer in the land, for the exceeding beauty of the imagery. Now *the letter* was written, probably, about the same time with the *poem*, though the poem was not published till nearly a year after. The writers were not, and never have been, acquainted with each other, and neither could possibly have seen the work of the other before writing. Now, was there any plagiarism here? Yet there are plenty of '*identities.*' The author of the letter, when urged, some years after, to have it published, consented very reluctantly, through fear that *he* should be charged with theft; and, very probably, the charge has been made, though I have never seen it. May not this often occur? What is more natural? Images are not created, but suggested. And why not the same images, when the circumstances are precisely the same, to different minds? Perhaps your critic will reply, that the case is different after one of the compositions is published. How so? Does he, or you, or anybody, read everything that is published? I am a great admirer, and a general reader, of poetry. But, by what accident I do not know, I had never seen the beautiful lines of Hood, till your criti-

cal friend brought them to my notice in the 'Mirror.' It is certainly possible that Aldrich had not seen them several years ago — and more than probable that Hood had not seen Aldrich's. Yet your friend affects great sympathy for both, in view of their bitter compunctions of conscience, for their literary piracies.

"But, after all, wherein does the real resemblance between these two compositions consist? Mr. ——, I had almost named him, finds nearly a dozen points of resemblance. But when he includes rhythm, metre, and stanza among the dozen, he only shows a bitter resolution to make out a case, and not a disposition to do impartial justice. Surely the critic himself, who is one of our finest *poets*, does not mean to deny that these mere externals are the common property of all bards. He does not feel it necessary to strike out a new stanza, or to invent new feet and measures, whenever he would clothe his 'breathing thoughts in words that burn.' Again, it is not improbable that, within the period of time since these two writers, Hood and Aldrich, came on the stage, ten thousand *females* have *died*, and *died tranquilly*, and *died just at daybreak*, and that *after passing a tranquil night*, and, so dying, were supposed by their friends to have passed at once to a better world, a *morning in heaven*. The poets are both describing an actual, and not an imaginary occurrence. And here — including those before mentioned, which are common property — are *nine* of the critic's *identities*, which go to make up the evidence of plagiarism. The last six, it requires no stretch of the imagination to suppose, they might each have seen and noticed separately. The most of them, one other poet, at least, *has* noticed, many years ago, in a beautiful poem on these words of the angel to the wrestling Jacob — 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.' Wonder if Hood ever saw that? The few remaining 'identities' are, to my mind, sufficiently disposed of by what I have already said. I confess I was not able, until the appearance of the critic's second paper, in which he

brought them out specially, 'marked, numbered, and labelled,' to perceive the resemblance on which the grave charge of literary piracy and moral dishonesty of the meanest kind was based. In view of all the glaring improbabilities of such a case, a critic should be very slow to make such a charge. I say *glaring improbabilities*, for it seems to me that no circumstantial evidence could be sufficient to secure a verdict of *theft* in such a case. Look at it. A man who aspires to fame, who seeks the esteem and praise of the world, and lives upon his reputation as his vital element, attempts to win his object — how? By stealing, in open day, the finest passages, the most beautiful thoughts (no others are worth stealing), and the rarest images of another, and claiming them as his own; and that too, when he knows that every competitor for fame, and every critical tribunal in the world, as well as the real owner, will be ready to *identify* the borrowed plumes in a moment, and cry him down as a *thief*. A madman, an idiot, if he were capable of such an achievement, might do it, but no other. A rogue may steal what he can conceal in his pocket, or his chest — but one must be utterly *non compos* to steal a splendid shawl, or a magnificent plume, which had been admired by thousands for its singular beauty, for the purpose of sporting it in Broadway. In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases of a thousand, such charges are absurd, and indicate rather the carping littleness of the critic, than the delinquency of his victim.

"Pray did you ever think the worse of Dana because your friend, John Neal, charged him with pirating upon Paul Allen, and Bryant too, in his poem of 'THE DYING RAVEN'? or of yourself, because the same friend thought he had detected you in the very act of stealing from Pinkney and Miss Francis, now Mrs. Child? Surely not. Everybody knows that John Neal wishes to be supposed to have read everything that ever was written, and never have forgotten anything. He delights, therefore, in showing up such resemblances.

"And now — for the matter of Longfellow's imitations — in what do they consist? The critic is not very specific in this charge. Of what kind are they? Are they imitations of thought? Why not call them *plagiarisms* then, and show them up? Or are they only verbal imitations of style? Perhaps *this* is one of them, in his poem on the 'Sea Weed': —

"'*drifting, drifting, drifting*
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main,'

resembling, in form and collocation only, a line in a beautiful and very powerful poem of Mr. Edgar A. Poe. (Write it rather Edgar, A *Poet*, and then it is right to a *t*.) I have not the poem before me, and have forgotten its title. But he is describing a magnificent intellect in ruins, if I remember rightly — and, speaking of the eloquence of its better days, represents it as

"'*flowing, flowing, flowing*
Like a river.'

Is this what the critic means? Is it *such* imitations as this that he alludes to? If not, I am at fault, either in my reading of Longfellow, or in my general familiarity with the American poets. If this *be* the kind of imitation referred to, permit me to say, the charge is too paltry for any man, who valued his reputation either as a gentleman or a scholar, to make. Who, for example, would wish to be guilty of the littleness of detracting from the uncommon merit of that remarkable poem of this same Mr. Poe's, recently published in the 'Mirror,' from the 'American Review,' entitled 'The Raven,' by charging *him* with the paltriness of imitation? And yet, some snarling critic, who might envy the reputation he had not the genius to secure for himself, might refer to the frequent, very forcible, but rather quaint repetition, in the last two lines of many of the stanzas, as a palpable imitation of the

manner of Coleridge, in several stanzas of 'The Ancient Mariner.' Let me put them together. Mr. Poe says:

"'Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore.'

And again:—

"'It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.'

Mr. Coleridge says (running two lines into one):—

"'For all averred, I had killed the bird that made the breeze to blow.
"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay, that made the breeze to blow."'

And again:—

"'Then all averred, I had killed the bird that brought the fog and mist.
"'T was right," said they, "such birds to slay, that bring the fog and mist."'

"I have before me an anonymous poem, which I first saw some five years ago, entitled 'The Bird of the Dream.' I should like to transcribe the whole, but it is too long. The author was awaked from sleep by the song of a beautiful bird, sitting on the sill of his window; the sweet notes had mingled with his dreams, and brought to his remembrance, the sweeter voice of his lost 'CLARE.' He says:—

"'And thou wert in my dream — a spirit thou didst seem —
The spirit of a friend long since departed;
Oh! she was fair and bright, but she left me one dark night —
She left me all alone, and broken-hearted.

. . . . . .

"'My dream went on, and thou went a-warbling too,
Mingling the harmonies of earth and heaven;
Till *away* — *away* — *away* — beyond the realms of day —
My angel CLARE to my embrace was given.

. . . . . .

"'Sweet bird from realms of light, oh! come again to-night,
Come to my window — perch upon my chair —
Come give me back again that deep impassioned strain
That tells me thou hast seen and loved my CLARE.'

"Now I shall not charge Mr. Poe with plagiarism; for, as I have said, such charges are perfectly absurd. Ten to one, he never saw this before. But let us look at the '*identities*' that may be made out between this and 'The Raven.' *First*, in each case, the poet is a broken-hearted lover. *Second*, that lover longs for some hereafter communion with the departed. *Third*, there is a bird. *Fourth*, the bird is at the poet's window. *Fifth*, the bird, being at the poet's window, makes a noise. *Sixth*, making a noise, attracts the attention of the poet; who, *Seventh*, was half asleep, dozing, dreaming. *Eighth*, the poet invites the bird to come in. *Ninth*, a confabulation ensues. *Tenth*, the bird is supposed to be a visitor from the land of spirits. *Eleventh*, allusion is made to the departed. *Twelfth*, intimation is given that the bird knew something of the departed. *Thirteenth*, that he knew her worth and loveliness. *Fourteenth*, the bird seems willing to linger with the poet. *Fifteenth*, there is a repetition, in the second and fourth lines, of a part, and that the emphatic part, of the first and third. Here is a round baker's-dozen (and one to spare) of *identities*, to offset the dozen found between Aldrich and Hood, and that too, without a word of *rhythm*, metre, or stanza, which should never form a part of such a comparison. Moreover, this same poem contains an example of that kind of repetition, which I have supposed the critic meant to charge upon Longfellow as one of his imitations: —

"'Away — away — away,' etc.

"I might pursue it further. But I will not. Such criticisms only make the *author* of them contemptible, without soiling a plume in the cap of his victim. I have selected this poem of Mr. Poe's, for illustrating my remarks,

because it is recent, and must be familiar to all the lovers of true poetry hereabouts. It is remarkable for its power, beauty, and originality (out upon the automaton owl that has presumed to croak out a miserable parody — I commend him to the tender mercies of Haynes Bayley [1]), and shows, more forcibly than any which I can think of, the absurdity and shallowness of this kind of criticism. One word more, — though acquainted with Mr. Longfellow, I have never seen Mr. Aldrich, nor do I even know in what part of the country he resides; and I have no acquaintance with Mr. Poe. I have written what I have written from no personal motives, but simply because, from my earliest reading of reviews and critical notices, I have been disgusted with this wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason. I scarcely remember an instance where the resemblances detected were not exceedingly far-fetched and shadowy, and only perceptible to a mind predisposed to suspicion, and accustomed to splitting hairs.

"OUTIS."

What I admire in this letter is the gentlemanly grace of its manner, and the chivalry which has prompted its composition. What I do *not* admire is all the rest. In especial, I do not admire the desperation of the effort to make out a case. No gentleman should degrade himself, on any grounds, to the paltriness of *ex parte* argument; and I shall not insult "Outis" at the outset by assuming for a moment that he "Outis") is weak enough to suppose me (Poe) silly enough to look upon all this abominable rigmarole as anything better than a very respectable specimen of special pleading.

As a general rule in a case of this kind, I should wish to begin with the beginning, but as I have been

[1] "I would be a Parody, written by a ninny,
Not worth a penny, and sold for a guinea," etc.

unable, in running my eye over "Outis's" remarks, to discover that they have any beginning at all, I shall be pardoned for touching them in the order which suits me best. "Outis" need not have put himself to the trouble of informing his readers that he has "some acquaintance with Mr. Longfellow." It was needless also to mention that he did not know *me*. I thank him for his many flatteries, but of their inconsistency I complain. To speak of me in one breath as a poet and in the next to insinuate charges of "carping littleness" is simply to put forth a flat paradox. When a plagiarism is committed and detected, the word "littleness," and other similar words, are immediately brought into play. To the words themselves I have no objection whatever; but their application might occasionally be improved.

Is it altogether impossible that a critic be instigated to the exposure of a plagiarism, or still better, of plagiarism generally wherever he meets it, by a strictly honorable and even charitable motive? Let us see. A theft of this kind is committed — for the present we will admit the *possibility* that a theft of this character can be committed. The chances of course are, that an established author steals from an unknown one, rather than the converse; for in proportion to the circulation of the original is the risk of the plagiarism's detection. The person about to commit the theft hopes for impunity altogether on the ground of the reconditeness of the source from which he thieves. But this obvious consideration is rarely borne in mind. We read a certain passage in a certain book. We meet a passage nearly similar in another book. The first book is not at hand, and we cannot compare dates. We decide by what we fancy the probabilities

of the case. The one author is a distinguished man, — our sympathies are always in favor of distinction. "It is not likely," we say in our hearts, "that so distinguished a personage as A. would be guilty of plagiarism from this B., of whom nobody in the world has ever heard." We give judgment, therefore, at once against B., of whom nobody in the world has ever heard; and it is for the very reason that nobody in the world *has* ever heard of him, that, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, the judgment so precipitately given is erroneous. Now, then, the plagiarist has not merely committed a wrong in itself, — a wrong whose incomparable meanness would deserve exposure on absolute grounds, — but he, the guilty, the successful, the eminent, has fastened the degradation of his crime, the retribution which should have overtaken it in his own person, upon the guiltless, the toiling, the unfriended struggler up the mountainous path of Fame. Is not sympathy for the plagiarist, then, about as sagacious and about as generous as would be sympathy for the murderer whose exultant escape from the noose of the hangman should be the cause of an innocent man's being hung? And because I, for one, should wish to throttle the guilty with the view of letting the innocent go, could it be considered proper on the part of any "acquaintance of Mr. Longfellow's" who came to witness the execution — could it be thought, I say, either chivalrous or decorous on the part of this "acquaintance" to get up against me a charge of "carping littleness" while we stood amicably together at the foot of the gallows?

In all this I have taken it for granted that such a sin as plagiarism exists. We are informed by "Outis," however, that it does *not*. "I shall not charge Mr.

Poe with plagiarism," he says, "for, as I have said, such charges are perfectly absurd." An assertion of this kind is certainly *funny* (I am aware of no other epithet which precisely applies to it), and I have much curiosity to know if "Outis" is prepared to swear to its truth, holding aloft his right hand, of course, and kissing the back of D'Israeli's "Curiosities," or the "*Mélanges*" of Suard and André. But if the assertion is funny (and it *is*), it is by no means an original thing. It is precisely, in fact, what all the plagiarists, and all the "acquaintances" of the plagiarists since the flood, have maintained with a very praiseworthy resolution. The attempt to prove, however, by reasoning *à priori*, that plagiarism cannot exist, is too good an idea on the part of "Outis" not to be a plagiarism in itself. Are we mistaken? — or have we seen the following words before in Joseph Miller, where that ingenious gentleman is bent upon demonstrating that a leg of mutton is and ought to be a turnip?

"A man who aspires to fame, etc., attempts to win his object — how? By stealing, *in open day*, the finest passages, the most beautiful thoughts (no others are worth stealing), and claiming them as his own; and that too when he *knows* that every competitor, etc., will be ready to cry him down as a thief."

Is it possible? — is it conceivable that "Outis" does not here see the begging of the whole question? Why, of course, if the theft had to be committed "in open day," it would not be committed; and if the thief "knew" that every one would cry him down, he would be too excessive a fool to make even a decent thief if he indulged his thieving propensities in any respect. But he thieves at night, — in the dark, —

and *not* in the open day (if he suspects it), and he does *not* know that he will be detected at all. Of the class of wilful plagiarists, nine out of ten are authors of established reputation, who plunder recondite, neglected, or forgotten books.

II

"I shall not accuse Mr. Poe of plagiarism," says "Outis," "for, as I have observed before, such charges are perfectly absurd;" and "Outis" is certainly right in dwelling on the point that he has observed this thing before. It is the one original point of his essay, — for I really believe that no one else was ever silly enough to "observe it before."

Here is a gentleman who writes in certain respects as a gentleman should, and who yet has the effrontery to base a defence of a friend from the charge of plagiarism on the broad ground that no such thing as plagiarism ever existed. I confess that to an assertion of this nature there is no little difficulty in getting up a reply. What in the world can a man say in a case of this kind? — he cannot of course give utterance to the first epithets that spring to his lips — and yet what else shall he utter that shall not have an air of direct insult to the common-sense of mankind? What could any judge on any bench in the country do but laugh or swear at the attorney who should begin his defence of a petty-larceny client with an oration demonstrating *a priori* that no such thing as petty larceny ever had been, or in the nature of things ever could be committed? And yet the attorney might make as sensible a speech as "Outis" — even a more sensible one — anything but a less sensible one. Indeed, *mutato nomine*, he might employ "Outis's"

identical words. He might say: "In view, gentlemen of the jury, of all the glaring improbabilities of such a case, a prosecuting attorney should be very slow to make such a charge. I say glaring improbabilities, for it seems to me that no circumstantial evidence could be sufficient to secure a verdict of theft in such a case. Look *at* it. [Here the judge would look at the maker of the speech.] Look at it. A man who aspires to (the) fame (of being a beau), — who seeks the esteem and praise of all the world (of dandies), and lives upon his reputation (for broadcloth), as his vital element, attempts to win his object — how? By stealing in open day the finest waistcoats, the most beautiful dress-coats (no others are worth stealing), and the rarest pantaloons of another, and claiming them as his own; and that too when he knows that every competitor for (the) fame (of Brummelism), and every fashion-plate magazine in the world, as well as the real owner, will be ready to identify the borrowed plumes in a moment, and cry him down as a thief. A madman, an idiot, if he were capable of such an achievement, might do it, gentlemen of the jury, but no other."

Now, of course, no judge in the world whose sense of duty was not overruled by a stronger sense of the facetious, would permit the attorney to proceed with any such speech. It would never do to have the time of the court occupied by this gentleman's well-meant endeavor to show *a priori* the impossibility of that ever happening which the clerk of this same court could show *a posteriori* had been happening by wholesale ever since there had been such a thing as a foreign count. And yet the speech of the attorney was really a very excellent speech, when we compare

it with that of "Outis." For the "glaring improbability" of the plagiarism is a mere nothing by the side of the "glaring improbability" of the theft of the sky-blue dress-coat, and the yellow plaid pantaloons; we may take it for granted, of course, that the thief was one of the upper ten thousand of thieves, and would not have put himself to the trouble of appropriating any garments that were not of indisputable *bon ton*, and patronized even by Professor Longfellow himself. The improbability of the literary theft, I say, is really a mere trifle in comparison with the broadcloth larceny. For the plagiarist is either a man of no note or a man of note. In the first case, he is usually an ignoramus, and getting possession of a rather rare book, plunders it without scruple, on the ground that nobody has ever seen a copy of it except himself. In the second case (which is a more general one by far), he pilfers from some poverty-stricken, and therefore neglected man of genius, on the reasonable supposition that this neglected man of genius will very soon cut his throat, or die of starvation (the sooner the better, no doubt), and that in the mean time he will be too busy in keeping the wolf from the door to look after the purloiners of his property — and too poor, and too cowed, and for these reasons too contemptible, under any circumstances, to dare accuse of so base a thing as theft the wealthy and triumphant gentleman of elegant leisure who has only done the vagabond too much honor in knocking him down and robbing him upon the highway.

The plagiarist, then, in either case, has very reasonable ground for expecting impunity, and at all events it is because he thinks so that he perpetrates the plagiarism; but how is it with the count who steps

into the shop of the tailor, and slips under his cloak the sky-blue dress-coat and the yellow plaid pantaloons? He, the count, would be a greater fool in these matters than a count ever was, if he did not perceive at once that the chances were about nine hundred and ninety-nine to one that he would be caught the next morning before twelve o'clock, in the very first bloom and blush of his promenade down Broadway, by some one of those officious individuals who are continually on the *qui vive* to catch the counts and take away from them their sky-blue coats and yellow plaid pantaloons. Yes, undoubtedly; the count is very well aware of all this; but he takes into consideration that although the nine hundred and ninety-nine chances *are* certainly against him, the one is just as certainly in his favor — that luck is everything — that life is short — that the weather is fine — and that if he can only manage to get safely through his promenade down Broadway in the sky-blue dress-coat and the yellow plaid pantaloons, he will enjoy the high honor, for once in his life, at least, of being mistaken, by fifteen ladies out of twenty, either for Professor Longfellow, or Phœbus Apollo. And this consideration is enough — the half of it would have been more than enough to satisfy the count that, in putting the garments under his cloak, he is doing a very sagacious and very commendable thing. He steals them, then, at once, and without scruple, and, when he is caught arrayed in them the next morning, he is, of course, highly amused to hear his counsel make an oration in court about the "glaring improbability" of his having stolen them when he stole them — by way of showing the abstract impossibility of their ever having been stolen at all.

"What is plagiarism?" demands "Outis" at the outset, *avec l'air d'un Romain qui sauve sa patrie* — "What is plagiarism, and what constitutes a good ground for the charge?" Of course all men anticipate something unusually happy in the way of reply to queries so cavernously propounded; but if so, then all men have forgotten, or no man has ever known, that "Outis" is a Yankee. He answers the two questions by two others — and perhaps this is quite as much as any one should expect him to do. "Did no two men," he says, "ever think alike without stealing one from the other? — or thinking alike, did no two men ever use the same or similar words to convey the thoughts, and that without any communication with each other? — To deny it is absurd." Of course it is — very absurd; and the only thing *more* absurd that I can call to mind at present is the supposition that any person ever entertained an idea of denying it. But are we to understand the denying it, or the absurdity of denying it, or the absurdity of supposing that any person intended to deny it, as the true answer to the original queries?

But let me aid "Outis" to a distinct conception of his own irrelevance. I accuse his friend, specifically, of a plagiarism. This accusation "Outis" rebuts by asking me with a grave face — not whether the friend might not, in this individual case, and in the compass of eight short lines, have happened upon ten or twelve peculiar identities of thought and identities of expression with the author from whom I charge him with plagiarizing — but simply whether I do not admit the *possibility* that once in the course of eternity some two individuals might not happen upon a single iden-

tity of thought, and give it voice in a single identity of expression.

Now, frankly, I admit the possibility in question, and would request my friends to get ready for me a strait-jacket if I did not. There can be no doubt in the world, for example, that "Outis" considers me a fool: — the thing is sufficiently plain: and this opinion on the part of "Outis" is what mankind have agreed to denominate an idea; and this idea is also entertained by Mr. Aldrich, and by Mr. Longfellow — and by Mrs. "Outis" and her seven children — and by Mrs. Aldrich and hers — and by Mrs. Longfellow and hers — including the grandchildren and great grandchildren, if any, who will be instructed to transmit the idea in unadulterated purity down an infinite vista of generations yet to come. And of this idea thus extensively entertained, it would really be a very difficult thing to vary the expression in any material degree. A remarkable similarity would be brought about, indeed, by the desire of the parties in question to put the thought into as compendious a form as possible, by way of bringing it to a focus at once and having done with it upon the spot.

"Outis" will perceive, therefore, that I have every desire in the world to afford him that "fair play" which he considers "a jewel," since I admit not only the possibility of the class of coincidences for which he contends, but even the impossibility of there not existing just as many of these coincidences as he may consider necessary to make out his case. One of the species he details as follows, at some length: —

"Some years ago, a letter was written from some part of New England, describing one of those scenes, not very common during what is called 'the January thaw,' when

the snow, mingled with rain, and freezing as it falls, forms a perfect covering of ice upon every object. The storm clears away suddenly, and the moon comes up. The letter proceeds — '*every tree and shrub, as far as the eye can reach, of pure transparent glass — a perfect garden of moving, waving, breathing crystals. . . . Every tree is a diamond chandelier, with a whole constellation of stars clustering to every socket,*' etc. This letter was laid away where such things usually are, in a private drawer, and did not see the light for many years. But the very next autumn brought out, among the splendid annuals got up in the country, a beautiful poem from Whittier, describing the same, or rather a similar scene, in which the line

"'The trees, like crystal chandeliers,'

was put in italics by every reviewer in the land, for the exceeding beauty of the imagery. Now *the letter* was written, probably, about the same time with the *poem*, though the poem was not published till nearly a year after. The writers were not, and never have been, acquainted with each other, and neither could possibly have seen the work of the other before writing. Now, was there any plagiarism here?"

After the fashion of "Outis" himself I shall answer his query by another. What has the question whether the chandelier friend committed a plagiarism, to do with the question whether the death-bed friend committed a plagiarism or whether it is possible or impossible that plagiarism, generally, can be committed? But, merely for courtesy's sake, I step aside from the exact matter in hand. In the case mentioned, I should consider material differences in the terms of description as more remarkable than coincidences. Since the tree *really* looked like a chandelier, the true wonder would have been in likening it to anything

else. Of course, nine commonplace men out of ten would have maintained it to be a chandelier-looking tree. No *poet* of any pretension, however, would have committed himself so far as to put such a similitude in print. The chandelier might have been poetically likened to the crystallized tree — but the converse is a platitude. The gorgeous unaltered handiwork of Nature is always degraded by comparison with the tawdry gew-gaws of Art; and perhaps the very ugliest thing in the world is a chandelier. If "every reviewer in the land put the passage into italics on account of the exceeding beauty of the imagery," then every printer's devil in the land should have been flogged for not taking it out of italics upon the spot, and putting it in the plainest Roman — which is too good for it by one-half.

I put no faith in the *nil admirari*, and am apt to be amazed at every second thing which I see. One of the most amazing things I have yet seen is the complacency with which "Outis" throws to the right and left his anonymous assertions, taking it for granted that because he ("Nobody") asserts them, I must believe them as a matter of course. However, he is quite in the right. I am perfectly ready to admit anything that he pleases, and am prepared to put as implicit faith in his *ipse dixit* as the Bishop of Autun did in the Bible — on the ground that he knew nothing about it at all. We will understand it, then, not merely as an anonymous assertion but as an absolute fact, that the two chandelier authors "were not and never have been acquainted with each other, and that neither could have seen the work of the other before writing." We will agree to understand all this as indisputable truth, I say, through motives of the purest charity

for the purpose of assisting a friend out of trouble, and without reference to the consideration that no third person short of Signor Blitz or Professor Rogers could in any conceivable manner have satisfied himself of the truth of the twentieth part of it. Admitting this and everything else, to be as true as the Pentateuch, it follows that plagiarism in the case in question was a thing that could not by any possibility be — and do I rightly comprehend "Outis" as demonstrating the impossibility of plagiarism where it *is* possible, by adducing instances of inevitable similarity under circumstances where it *is not?* The fact is, that through want of space and time to follow "Outis" through the labyrinth of impertinences in which he is scrambling about, I am constrained, much against my sense of decorum, to place him in the high-road of his argument, so that he may see where he is, and what he is doing, and what it is that he is endeavoring to demonstrate.

He wishes to show, then, that Mr. Longfellow is innocent of the imitation with which I have charged him, and that Mr. Aldrich is innocent of the plagiarism with which I have *not* charged him; and this duplicate innocence is expected to be proved by showing the possibility that a certain, or that any uncertain series of coincidences may be the result of pure accident. Now of course I cannot be sure that "Outis" will regard my admission as a service or a disservice, but I admit the possibility at once; and not only this, but I would admit it as a possibility were the coincidences a billion, and each of the most definitive peculiarity that human ingenuity could conceive. But in admitting this, I admit just nothing at all, so far as the advancement of "Outis's" proper argument is

concerned. The affair is one of *probabilities* altogether, and can be satisfactorily settled only by reference to their Calculus.

III

"Pray," inquires "Outis" of Mr. Willis, "did you ever think the worse of Dana because your friend John Neal charged him with pirating upon Paul Allen, and Bryant, too, in his poem of 'THE DYING RAVEN'?" I am sincerely disposed to give "Outis" his due, and will not pretend to deny his happy facility in asking irrelevant questions. In the present case, we can only imagine Mr. Willis's reply: — "My dear sir," he might say, "I certainly do not think much the worse of Mr. Dana, because Mr. Neal *charged* him with the piracy, but be so kind as not to inquire what might have been my opinion had there been any substantiation of the charge." I quote "Outis's" inquiry, however, not so much to insist upon its singular luminousness, as to call attention to the argument embodied in the capital letters of "THE DYING RAVEN."

Now, were I, in any spasm of perversity, to direct "Outis's" catechetical artillery against himself, and demand of him explicitly *his reasons* for causing those three words to be printed in capitals, what in the world would he do for a reply? As a matter of course, for some moments, he would be profoundly embarrassed; but, being a true man, and a chivalrous one, as all defenders of Mr. Longfellow must be, he could not fail, in the end, to admit that they were so printed for the purpose of safely insinuating a charge which not even an "Outis" had the impudence openly to utter. Let us imagine his thoughts while carefully

twice underscoring the words. Is it impossible that they ran thus? — "I am perfectly well aware, to be sure, that the only conceivable resemblance between Mr. Bryant's poem and Mr. Poe's poem, lies in their common reference to a raven; but then, what I am writing will be seen by some who have not read Mr. Bryant's poem, and by many who have never heard of Mr. Poe's, and among these classes I shall be able to do Mr. Poe a serious injustice and injury, by conveying the idea that there is really sufficient similarity to warrant that charge of plagiarism, which I, 'Outis,' the 'acquaintance of Mr. Longfellow,' am too high-minded and too merciful to prefer."

Now, I do not pretend to be positive that any such thoughts as these ever entered the brain of "Outis." Nor will I venture to designate the whole insinuation as a specimen of "carping littleness, too paltry for any man who values his reputation as a gentleman;" for, in the first place, the whole matter, as I have put it, is purely supposititious, and in the second, I should furnish ground for a new insinuation of the same character, inasmuch as I should be employing "Outis's" identical words. The fact is, "Outis" has happened upon the idea that the most direct method of rebutting one accusation is to get up another. By showing that *I* have committed a sin, he proposes to show that Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Longfellow have *not*. Leaving the underscored "DYING RAVEN" to argue its own case, he proceeds, therefore, as follows: —

"Who, for example, would wish to be guilty of the littleness of detracting from the uncommon merit of that remarkable poem of this same Mr. Poe's, recently published in the 'Mirror' from the 'American Review,' entitled, 'THE RAVEN,' by charging *him* with the paltriness of imi-

tation? And yet, some snarling critic, who might envy the reputation he had not the genius to secure for himself, might refer to the frequent, very forcible, but rather quaint repetition, in the last two lines of many of the stanzas, as a palpable imitation of the manner of Coleridge, in several stanzas of 'The Ancient Mariner.' Let me put them together. Mr. Poe says: —

'Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore.'

And again: —

'It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.'

Mr. Coleridge says (running two lines into one): —

'For all averred, I had killed the bird that made the breeze to blow.
"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay, that made the breeze to blow."'

And again: —

'Then all averred, I had killed the bird that brought the fog and mist.
"'T was right," said they, "such birds to slay, that bring the fog and mist."' "

The "rather quaint" is ingenious. Fully one-third of whatever effect "The Raven" has is wrought by the quaintness in question — a point elaborately introduced to accomplish a well-considered purpose. What idea would "Outis" entertain of me, were I to speak of his defence of his friends as very decent, very respectable, but rather meritorious? In the passages collated, there are two points upon which the "snarling critic" might base his insinuation — if ever so weak a "snarling critic" existed. Of these two points one is purely hypothetical — that is to say, it is disingenuously manufactured by Mr. Longfellow's

acquaintance to suit his own purposes, or perhaps the purposes of the imaginary snarling critic. The argument of the second point is demolished by my not only admitting it, but insisting upon it. Perhaps the least tedious mode of refuting "Outis" is to acknowledge nine-tenths of everything he may think proper to say.

But, in the present instance, what am I called upon to acknowledge? I am charged with imitating the repetition of phrase in the two concluding lines of a stanza, and of imitating this from Coleridge. But why not extend the accusation, and insinuate that I imitate it from everybody else? for certainly there is no poet living or dead who has not put in practice the identical effect — the well-understood effect of the *refrain*. Is "Outis's" argument to the end that *I* have no right to this thing for the reason that all the world has? If this is *not* his argument, will he be kind enough to inform me (at his leisure) what it *is?* Or is he prepared to confess himself so absurdly uninformed as not to know that whatever a poet claims on the score of original versification is claimed, not on account of any individual rhythmical or metrical effects (for *none* are individually original), but solely on account of the novelty of his *combinations* of old effects? The hypothesis, or manufacture, consists in the alteration of Coleridge's metre, with the view of forcing it into a merely ocular similarity with my own, and thus of imposing upon some one or two grossly ignorant readers. I give the verses of Coleridge as they *are*: —

> "For all averred, I had killed the bird
> That made the breeze to blow.
> 'Ah, wretch,' said they, 'the bird to slay,
> That made the breeze to blow.'"

The verses beginning, "*Then* all averred," etc., are arranged in the same manner. Now I have taken it for granted that it is "Outis's" design to impose the idea of similarity between my lines and those of Coleridge, upon some one or two grossly ignorant individuals; at the same time, whoever attempts such an imposition is rendered liable at least to the suspicion of very gross ignorance himself. The ignorance or the knavery are the two uncomfortable horns of his dilemma.

Let us see. Coleridge's lines are arranged in quatrains; mine in couplets. His first and third lines rhyme at the closes of the second and fourth feet; mine flow continuously, without rhyme. His metre, briefly defined, is alternately tetrameter acatalectic and trimeter acatalectic; mine is uniformly octameter catalectic. It might be expected, however, that at least the *rhythm* would prove to be identical; but not so. Coleridge's is iambic (varied in the third foot of the first line with an anapæst); mine is the exact converse, trochaic. The fact is, that neither in rhythm, metre, stanza, or rhyme, is there even a *single* point of *approximation* throughout; the *only* similarity being the wickedly or sillily manufactured one of "Outis" himself, appealing from the ears to the eyes of the most uncultivated classes of the rabble. The ingenuity and validity of the manufacture might be approached, although certainly not paralleled, by an attempt to show that blue and yellow pigments, standing unmixed at separate ends of a studio, were equivalent to green. I say "not paralleled," for even the *mixing* of the pigments, in the case of "Outis," would be very far, as I have shown, from producing the supposititious effect. Coleridge's lines, written together, would result in rhymed iambic heptameter acatalectic,

while mine are unrhymed trochaic octameter catalectic, differing in every conceivable circumstance. A closer parallel than the one I have imagined would be the demonstration that two are equal to four, on the ground that, possessing two dollars, a man will have four when he gets an additional couple; for that the additional couple is *somewhere*, no one, after due consideration, will deny.

If "Outis" will now take a seat upon one of the horns of his dilemma, I will proceed to the third variation of the charges *insinuated* through the medium of the "snarling critic," in the passage heretofore quoted.[1]

The first point to be attended to is the "ten to one that I never saw it before." Ten to one that I never did — but "Outis" might have remembered that twenty to one I should *like* to see it. In accusing either Mr. Aldrich or Mr. Hood, I printed their poems together and in full. But an *anonymous* gentleman rebuts my accusation by telling me that there is a certain similarity between a poem of my own and an *anonymous* poem which he has before *him*, and which he would like to transcribe if it were not too long. He contents himself, therefore, with giving me, from this too long poem, three stanzas which are shown, by a series of intervening asterisks, to have been *culled*, to suit his own purposes, from different portions of the poem, but which (again to suit his own purposes) he places before the public in consecutive connection! The least that can be said of the whole statement is that it is deliciously frank — but, upon the whole, the poem will look quite as well before *me*,

[1] "I have before me," to "part of such comparison," *ante*, pp. 145, 146.

as before "Outis," whose time is too much occupied to transcribe it. I, on the other hand, am entirely at leisure, and will transcribe and *print* the whole of it with the greatest pleasure in the world, provided always that it is not too long to refer to — too long to have its whereabouts pointed out — as I half suspect, from "Outis's" silence on the subject, that *it is*. One thing I will take it upon myself to say, in the spirit of prophecy: whether the poem in question is or is not in existence (and we have only "Nobody's" word that it is), the passages, *as quoted*, are not in existence, except as quoted by "Outis," who, in some particulars, I maintain, has falsified the text, for the purpose of *forcing* a similarity, as in the case of the verses of Coleridge. All this I assert in the spirit of prophecy, while we await the forthcoming of the poem. In the mean time, we will estimate the "identities" with reference to "The Raven" as collated with the passages culled by "Outis" — granting him everything he is weak enough to imagine I am in duty bound to grant, admitting that the poem as a whole exists, that the words and lines are ingenuously written, that the stanzas have the connection and sequence he gives them, and that, although he has been already found guilty of chicanery in one instance, he is at least entirely innocent in this.

He has established, he says, fifteen identities, "and that, too, without a word of rhythm, metre, or stanza, which should never form a part of such comparison" — by which, of course, we are to understand that *with* the rhythm, metre, and stanza (omitted only because they should never form a part of such comparison) he would have succeeded in establishing eighteen. Now I insist that rhythm, metre, and stanza *should* form

and *must* form a part of the comparison, and I will presently demonstrate what I say. I also insist, therefore, since he *could* find me guilty, if he *would*, upon these points, that guilty he *must* and *shall* find me upon the spot. He then, distinctly, has established eighteen identities; and I proceed to examine them one by one.

"*First*," he says, "in each case the poet is a broken-hearted lover." Not so: — *my* poet has no indication of a broken heart. On the contrary, he lives triumphantly in the expectation of meeting his Lenore in Aidenn, and is so indignant with the raven for maintaining that the meeting will never take place as to call him a liar and order him out of the house. Not only is my lover not a broken-hearted one; but I have been at some pains to show that broken hearts and matters of that kind are improperly made the subject of poems. I refer to a chapter of the articles entitled "Marginalia." "*Second*," says "Outis," "that lover longs for some hereafter communion with the departed." In my poem there is no expression of any such longing — the nearest approach to it is the triumphant consciousness which forms the thesis and staple of the whole. In "Outis's" poem the nearest approach to the "longing" is contained in the lover's request to the bird to repeat a strain that assures him (the lover) that it (the bird) has known the lost mistress. "*Third* — there is a bird," says "Outis." So there is. Mine, however, is a raven, and we may take it for granted that "Outis's" is either a nightingale or a cockatoo. "*Fourth*, the bird is at the poet's window." As regards my poem, true; as regards "Outis's," not: — the poet only *requests* the bird to come to the window. "*Fifth*, the bird, being at the

poet's window, makes a noise." The fourth specification failing, the fifth, which depends upon it, as a matter of course fails too. "*Sixth*, making a noise attracts the attention of the poet." The fifth specification failing, the sixth, which depends upon it, fails, likewise, and as a matter of course, as before. "*Seventh*, [the poet] was half asleep, dozing, dreaming." False altogether: only *my* poet was "napping," and this in the commencement of the poem, which is occupied with realities and waking action. "Outis's" poet is fast asleep and dreams everything. "*Eighth*, the poet invites the bird to come in." Another palpable failure. "Outis's" poet indeed asked his bird in; but my raven walked in without any invitation. "*Ninth*, a confabulation ensues." As regards my poem, true; but there is not a word of any confabulation in "Outis's." "*Tenth*, the bird is supposed to be a visitor from the land of spirits." As regards "Outis's" poem, this is true only if we give a wide interpretation to the phrase "realms of light." In my poem the bird is not only not from the world of spirits, but I have specifically conveyed the idea of his having escaped from "some unhappy master," of whom he had caught the word "nevermore;" in the concluding stanza, it is true, I suddenly convert him into an allegorical emblem or personification of Mournful Remembrance out of the shadow of which the poet is "lifted nevermore." "*Eleventh*, allusion is made to the departed." Admitted. "*Twelfth*, intimation is given that the bird knew something of the departed." True as regards "Outis's" poem only. No such intimation is given in mine. "*Thirteenth*, that he knew her worth and loveliness." Again — true only as regards

"Outis's" poem. It should be observed here that I have disproved the twelfth and thirteenth specifications purely for form's sake; they are nothing more than disingenuous repetitions of the eleventh. The "allusion to the departed" *is* the "intimation," and the intimation *is* that "he knew her worth and loveliness." "*Fourteenth*, the bird seems willing to linger with the poet." True only as regards my poem — in "Outis's" (as quoted) there is nothing of the kind. "*Fifteenth*, there is a repetition, in the second and fourth lines, of a part, and that the emphatic part, of the first and third." What is here asserted is true only of the first stanza quoted by "Outis," and of the commencement of the third. There is nothing of it in the second. In my poem there is nothing of it at all, with the exception of the repetition in the refrain, occurring at the *fifth* line of my stanza of six. I quote a stanza — by way of rendering everything perfectly intelligible, and affording "Outis" his much-coveted "fair play": —

> "Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting:
> "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
> Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
> Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door!
> Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
>
> Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Sixteenth, concerns the rhythm. "Outis's" is iambic; mine the exact converse, trochaic. *Seventeenth*, regards the metre. "Outis's" is hexameter, alternating with pentameter, both acatalectic.[1] Mine is

[1] This is as accurate a description as can be given of the alternating (of the second and fourth) lines in a few words. The fact

octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. *Eighteenth* and last has respect to the stanza — that is to say, to the general arrangement of the metre into masses. Of "Outis's" I need only say that it is a very common and certainly a very stupid one. My own has at least the merit of *being* my own. No writer, living or dead, has ever employed anything resembling it. The innumerable specific differences between it and that of "Outis" it would be a tedious matter to point out, but a far less difficult matter than to designate one individual point of similarity.

And now what are we to think of the eighteen identities of "Outis" — the fifteen that he establishes and the three that he could establish if he would — that is to say, if he could only bring himself to be so unmerciful? Of the whole eighteen, sixteen have shown themselves to be lamentable failures — having no more substantial basis than sheer misrepresentation, "too paltry for any man who values his reputation as a gentleman and a scholar," and depending altogether for effect upon the *chances* that nobody would take the trouble to investigate their falsehood or their truth. Two — the third and the eleventh — are sustained: and these two show that in both poems there is "an allusion to the departed," and that in

is, they are indescribable without more trouble than they are worth — and seem to me either to have been written by some one ignorant of the principles of verse, or to be misquoted. The line, however,

"That tells me thou hast seen and loved my Clare,"

answers the description I have given of the alternating verses, and was, no doubt, the general *intention* for all of them.

both poems there is "a bird." The first idea which suggests itself, at this point, is, whether *not* to have a bird and *not* to have an allusion to a deceased mistress would not be the truer features of distinctiveness after all — whether two poems which have *not* these items might not be more rationally charged with similarity than any two poems which *have*. But having thus disproved *all* the identities of "Outis" (for any one comprehending the principle of proof in such cases will admit that two *only* are in effect just nothing at all), I am quite ready, by way again of affording him "fair play," to expunge everything that has been said on the subject, and proceed as if every one of these eighteen identities were in the first bloom and deepest blush of a demonstration.

I might grant them as demonstrated, to be sure, on the ground which I have already touched — that to prove me or anybody else an imitator, is no mode of showing that Mr. Aldrich or Mr. Longfellow is *not*. But I might safely admit them on another and equally substantial consideration, which seems to have been overlooked by the zeal of "Outis" altogether. He has clearly forgotten that the *mere* number of such coincidences proves nothing, because at any moment we can oblige it to prove too much. It is the easiest thing imaginable to suggest, and even to do that which "Outis" has failed in doing — to demonstrate, a practically infinite series of identities between any two compositions in the world; but it by no means follows that all compositions in the world have a *similarity* one with the other, in any comprehensible sense of the term. I mean to say that regard must be had not only to the number of the coincidences, but to the peculiarity of each — this peculiarity growing less

and less necessary, and the effect of number more and more important, in a ratio prodigiously accumulative, as the investigation progresses. And again: regard must be had not only to the number *and* peculiarity of the coincidences, but to the antagonistic differences, if any, which surround them — and very especially to *the space* over which the coincidences are spread, and the number or paucity of the events, or incidents, from among which the coincidences are selected. When "Outis," for example, picks out his eighteen coincidences (which I am now granting as sustained) from a poem so long as "The Raven," in collation with a poem not forthcoming, and which may, therefore, for anything anybody knows to the contrary, be as long as an infinite flock of ravens, he is merely putting himself to unnecessary trouble in getting together phantoms of arguments that can have no substance wherewith to aid his demonstration, until the ascertained extent of the unknown poem from which they are culled affords them a purpose and a palpability. Can any man doubt that between the "Iliad" and the "Paradise Lost" there might be established even a thousand very idiosyncratic identities? — and yet is any man fool enough to maintain that the "Iliad" is the only original of the "Paradise Lost"?

But how is it in the case of Messieurs Aldrich and Hood? The poems here are both remarkably brief; and as I have every intention to do justice, and no other intention in the world, I shall be pardoned for again directing attention to them.[1]

Now let it be understood that I am entirely uninformed as to which of these two poems was first pub-

[1] See page 139.

lished. And so little has the question of priority to do with my thesis, that I shall not put myself to the trouble of inquiring. What I maintain is, that there are sufficient grounds for belief that the one is plagiarized from the other. *Who* is the original, and *who* is the plagiarist, are points I leave to be settled by any one who thinks the matter of sufficient consequence to give it his attention. But the man who shall deny the plagiarism abstractly — what is it that he calls upon us to believe? *First* — that two poets, in remote parts of the world, conceived the idea of composing a poem on the subject of *Death*. Of course, there is nothing remarkable in this. Death is a naturally poetic theme, and suggests itself by a seeming spontaneity to every poet in the world. But had the subject chosen by the two widely separated poets been even strikingly peculiar — had it been, for example, *a porcupine*, *a piece of gingerbread*, or anything unlikely to be made the subject of a poem, still no sensible person would have insisted upon the single coincidence as anything *beyond* a single coincidence. We have no difficulty, therefore, in believing what, so far, we are called upon to believe. *Secondly*, we must credit that the two poets concluded to write not only on death, but on the death of a *woman*. Here the mind, observing the two identities, reverts to their peculiarity, or non-peculiarity, and finding *no* peculiarity — admitting that the death of a woman is a naturally suggested poetic subject — has no difficulty also in admitting the two coincidences as such, and nothing beyond. *Thirdly*, we are called upon to believe that the two poets not only concluded to write upon death, and upon the death of a woman, but that, from the innumerable phases of death, the

phase of *tranquillity* was happened upon by each. Here the intellect commences a slight rebellion, but it is quieted by the admission, partly, of the spontaneity with which such an idea might arise, and partly of the *possibility* of the coincidences, independently of the consideration of spontaneity. *Fourthly*, we are required to believe that the two poets happened not only upon death, the death of a woman, and the tranquil death of a woman, but upon the idea of representing this woman as lying tranquilly *throughout the whole night*, in spite of the infinity of different durations which might have been imagined for her trance of tranquillity. At this point the reason perceives the evidence against these coincidences (as such and nothing more) to be increasing in geometrical ratio. It discards all idea of spontaneity, and, if it yield credence at all, yields it altogether on the ground of the indisputable *possibility*. *Fifthly*, we are requested to believe that our poets happened not only upon *death*, upon the death of a *woman*, upon the *tranquil* death of a woman, and upon the lying of this woman tranquilly *throughout the night*, but, also, upon the idea of selecting from the innumerable phases which characterize a tranquil death-bed the identical one of soft *breathing*, employing also the identical word. Here the reason gives up the endeavor to believe that one poem has not been suggested by the other: — if it be a reason accustomed to deal with the mathematical Calculus of Probabilities, it has abandoned this endeavor at the preceding stage of the investigation. The evidence of suggestion has now become prodigiously accumulate. Each succeeding coincidence (however slight) is proof not merely added, but multiplied by hundreds of thou-

sands. *Sixthly*, we are called upon to believe, not only that the two poets happened upon all this, together with the idea of the soft breathing, but also of employing the identical word *breathing*, in the same line with the identical word, *night*. This proposition the reason receives with a smile. *Seventhly*, however, we are required to admit, not only all that has been already found inadmissible, but in addition, that the two poets conceived the idea of representing the death of a woman as occurring precisely at the same instant, out of all the infinite instants of all time. This proposition the reason receives only with a sneer. *Eighthly*, we are called upon to acquiesce in the assertion, that not only all these improbabilities are probable, but that in addition again, the two poets happened upon the idea of representing the woman as stepping immediately into Paradise; and, *ninthly*, that both should not only happen upon all this, but upon the idea of writing a peculiarly brief poem, on so admirably suggestive a thesis; and, *tenthly*, that out of the various rhythms, that is to say, variations of poetic feet, they should have both happened upon the iambus; and, *eleventhly*, that out of the absolutely infinite metres that may be contrived from this rhythm, they should both have hit upon the tetrameter acatalectic for the first and third lines of a stanza; and, *twelfthly*, upon the trimeter acatalectic for the second and fourth; and, *thirteenthly*, upon an absolute identity of phrase at, *fourteenthly*, an absolutely identical position, namely: upon the phrases, "But when the morn," etc., and, "But when the sun," etc., occurring in the beginning of the first line in the last stanza of each poem; and, *fifteenthly* and lastly, that out of the vast multitude of appropriate *titles*,

they should both have happened upon one whose identity is interfered with at all, only by the difference between the definite and indefinite article.

Now the chances that these fifteen coincidences, so peculiar in character, and all occurring within the compass of eight short lines on the one part, and sixteen on the other — the chances, I say, that these coincidences are merely accidental, may be estimated, possibly, as about one to one hundred millions; and any man who reasons at all is of course grossly insulted in being called upon to credit them as accidental.

IV

"I have written what I have written," says "Outis," "from no personal motives, but simply because, from my earliest reading of reviews and critical notices, I have been disgusted with this wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason." I have already agreed to believe implicitly everything asserted by the anonymous "Outis," and am fully prepared to admit, even, his own contradictions, in one sentence, of what he has insisted upon in the sentence preceding. I shall assume it is indisputable, then (since "Nobody" says it), that first, he has no acquaintance with myself and "some acquaintance with Mr. Longfellow," and secondly, that he has "written what he has written from no personal motives whatever." That he has been disgusted with "the mangling of victims without rhyme or reason" is, to be sure, a little unaccountable, for the victims without rhyme or reason are precisely the victims that ought to be mangled; but that he has been disgusted "from his earliest reading" with critical notices and reviews is credible enough, if we but

imagine his "earliest reading" and earliest writing to have taken place about the same epoch of time.

But to be serious; if "Outis" has his own private reasons for being disgusted with what he terms the "wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason," there is not a man living, of common-sense and common honesty, who has not better reason (if possible) to be disgusted with the insufferable cant and shameless misrepresentation practised habitually by just such persons as "Outis," with the view of decrying by sheer strength of lungs, of trampling down, of rioting down, of mobbing down any man with a soul that bids him come out from among the general corruption of our public press, and take his stand upon the open ground of rectitude and honor. The "Outises" who practise this species of bullyism are, as a matter of course, anonymous. They are either the "victims without rhyme or reason who have been mangled by wholesale," or they are the relatives, or the relatives *of* the relatives of the "victims without rhyme or reason who have been mangled by wholesale." Their watchwords are "carping littleness," "envious malignity," and "personal abuse." Their low artifices are insinuated calumnies, and indefatigable whispers of regret, from post to pillar, that "Mr. So-and-So, or Mr. This-and-That *will* persist in rendering himself so dreadfully unpopular" — no one, in the mean time, being more thoroughly and painfully aware than these very "Outises" that the unpopularity of the just critic who reasons his way, guiltless of dogmatism, is confined altogether within the limits of the influence of the victims without rhyme and reason who have been mangled by wholesale. Even the manifest injustice of a Gifford is, I grieve to say,

an exceedingly popular thing; and there is *no* literary element of popularity more absolutely and more universally effective than the pungent impartiality of a Wilson or a Macaulay. In regard to my own course — without daring to arrogate to myself a single other quality of either of these eminent men than that pure contempt for mere prejudice and conventionality which actuated them all, I will now unscrupulously call the attention of the "Outises" to the fact, that it was during what they (the "Outises") would insinuate to be the unpopularity of my "wholesale mangling of the victims without rhyme and reason" that, in one year, the circulation of the "Southern Messenger" (a five-dollar journal) extended itself from seven hundred to nearly five thousand, — and that, in little more than twice the same time, "Graham's Magazine" swelled its list from five to fifty-two thousand subscribers.

I make no apology for these egotisms, and I proceed with them without hesitation — for, in myself, I am but defending a set of principles which no honest man need be ashamed of defending, and for whose defence no honest man will consider an apology required. The usual watchwords of the "Outises," when repelling a criticism, — their customary charges, overt or insinuated, are (as I have already said) those of "personal abuse" and "wholesale (or indiscriminate) mangling." In the present instance the latter solely is employed — for not even an "Outis" can accuse me, with even a decent show of verisimilitude, of having ever descended, in the most condemnatory of my reviews, to that personal abuse which, upon one or two occasions, has indeed been levelled at myself, in the spasmodic endeavors of aggrieved authors to rebut what I have ventured to demonstrate.

I have then to refute only the accusation of mangling by wholesale — and I refute it by the simplest reference to *fact*. What I have written remains; and is readily accessible in any of our public libraries. I have had one or two impotent enemies, and a multitude of cherished friends — and both friends and enemies have been, for the most part, literary people; yet no man can point to a single critique, among the very numerous ones which I have written during the last ten years, which is either wholly fault-finding or wholly in approbation; nor is there an instance to be discovered, among all that I have published, of my having set forth, either in praise or censure, a single opinion upon any critical topic of moment, without attempting, at least, to give it authority by something that wore the semblance of a reason. Now, is there a writer in the land, who, having dealt in criticism even one-fourth as much as myself, can of his own criticisms conscientiously say the same? The fact is, that very many of the most eminent men in America, whom I am proud to number among the sincerest of my friends, have been rendered so solely by their approbation of my comments upon their own works, comments in great measure directed *against* themselves as authors, belonging altogether to that very class of criticism which it is the petty policy of the "Outises" to cry down, with their diminutive voices, as offensive on the score of wholesale vituperation and personal abuse. If, to be brief, in what I have put forth there has been a preponderance of censure over commendation, — is there not to be imagined for this preponderance a more charitable motive than any which the "Outises" have been magnanimous enough to assign me — is not this preponderance, in a word,

the natural and inevitable tendency of all criticism worth the name in this age of so universal an authorship that no man in his senses will pretend to deny the vast predominance of bad writers over good?

"And now," says Outis, "for the matter of Longfellow's imitations — in what do they consist? — The critic is not very specific in this charge. Of what kind are they? Are they imitations of thought? Why not call them plagiarisms then, and show them up? Or are they only verbal imitations of style? Perhaps *this* is one of them, in his poem on the 'Sea Weed,'

> "'*drifting*, *drifting*, *drifting*,
> On the shifting
> Currents of the restless main,'

resembling in form and collocation only, a line in a beautiful and very powerful poem of MR. EDGAR A. POE. (Write it rather EDGAR, A *Poet*, and then it is right to a *t*.) I have not the poem before me, and have forgotten its title. But he is describing a magnificent intellect in ruins, if I remember rightly — and, speaking of the eloquence of its better days, represents it as

> "'*flowing*, *flowing*, *flowing*,
> Like a river.'

"Is this what the critic means? Is it *such* imitations as this that he alludes to? If not, I am at fault, either in my reading of Longfellow, or in my general familiarity with the American poets. If this *be* the kind of imitation referred to, permit me to say, the charge is too paltry for any man, who valued his reputation either as a gentleman or a scholar."

Elsewhere he says:

"Moreover, this poem contains an example of that kind of repetition which I have supposed the critic meant to charge upon Longfellow as one of his imitations —

"'Away — away — away' — etc.

"I might pursue it farther, but I will not. Such criticisms only make the author of them contemptible, without soiling a plume in the cap of his victim."

The first point to be here observed is the complacency with which "Outis" *supposes* me to make a certain charge and then vituperates me for his own absurd supposition. Were I, or any man, to accuse Mr. Longfellow of imitation on the score of thrice employing a word in consecutive connection, then I (or any man) would only be guilty of as great a sotticism as was "Outis" in accusing *me* of imitation on the score of the *refrain*. The repetition in question is assuredly not claimed by myself as original; I should therefore be wary how I charged Mr. Longfellow with imitating it from myself. It is, in fact, a musical effect, which is the common property of all mankind, and has been their common property for ages. Nevertheless the quotation of this

"*drifting, drifting, drifting,*"

is, on the part of "Outis," a little unfortunate. Most certainly the supposed imitation had never been observed by me; nor, even had I observed it, should I have considered it *individually*, as a point of any moment; — but all will admit (since "Outis" himself has noticed the parallel) that, were a second parallel of any obviousness to be established from the same brief poem, the "Sea Weed," this second would come in very strong corroboration of the first. Now, the sixth stanza of this very "Sea Weed" (which was first published in "Graham's Magazine" for January, 1845) commences with —

"*From the far off isles enchanted;*"

and in a little poem of my own, addressed "To Mary," and first published at page 636 of the first volume of the "Southern Literary Messenger," will be found the lines: —

> And thus thy memory is to me
> *Like some enchanted far-off isle*
> In some tumultuous sea.

But to show, in general, what I mean by accusing Mr. Longfellow of imitation, I collate his "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year" with "The Death of the Old Year" of Tennyson.

"MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR.

"Yes, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared!
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely, sorely!

"The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow;
Caw! caw! the rooks are calling;
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe!

"Through woods and mountain-passes
The winds, like anthems, roll;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing, 'Pray for this poor soul,
Pray, pray!'

"And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers;
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain!

"There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,

Crowned with wild flowers and with heather,
Like weak, despisèd Lear,
A king, a king!

"Then comes the summer-like day,
Bids the old man rejoice!
His joy! his last! Oh, the old man gray
Loveth that ever-soft voice,
Gentle and low.

"To the crimson woods he saith,
To the voice gentle and low
Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,
'Pray do not mock me so!
Do not laugh at me!'

"And now the sweet day is dead;
Cold in his arms it lies;
No stain from its breath is spread
Over the glassy skies,
No mist or stain!

"Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
In the wilderness alone,
'Vex not his ghost!'

"Then comes, with an awful roar,
Gathering and sounding on,
The storm-wind from Labrador,
The wind Euroclydon,
The storm-wind!

"Howl! howl! and from the forest
Sweep the red leaves away!
Would the sins that thou abhorrest,
O soul! could thus decay,
And be swept away!

"For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day;

And the stars, from heaven down-cast,
Like red leaves be swept away!
Kyrie eleyson!
Christe eleyson!"

"THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

"Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing.
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old Year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old Year, you shall not die.

"He lieth still: he doth not move:
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New Year will take 'em away.
Old Year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old Year, you shall not go.

"He frothed his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But though his eyes are waxing dim,
And though his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old Year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I 've half a mind to die with you,
Old Year, if you must die.

"He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he 'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New Year blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

"How hard he breathes! Over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro;
The cricket chirps; the light burns low:
'T is nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands before you die;
Old Year, we 'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

"His face is growing sharp and thin —
Alack! our friend is gone!
Close up his eyes; tie up his chin;
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There 's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door."

I have no idea of commenting, at any length, upon this imitation, which is too palpable to be mistaken, and which belongs to the most barbarous class of literary piracy: that class in which, while the words of the wronged author are avoided, his most intangible, and therefore his least defensible and least reclaimable property, is appropriated. Here, with the exception of lapses which, however, speak volumes (such for instance as the use of the capitalized "Old Year," the general peculiarity of the rhythm, and the absence of rhyme at the end of each stanza), there is nothing of a visible or palpable nature by which the source of the American poem can be established. But then nearly all that is valuable in the piece of

Tennyson is the first conception of personifying the Old Year as a dying old man, with the singularly wild and fantastic manner in which that conception is carried out. Of this conception and of this manner he is robbed. What is here not taken from Tennyson is made up mosaically from the death scene of Cordelia, in "Lear" — to which I refer the curious reader.

In "Graham's Magazine" for February, 1843, there appeared a poem, furnished by Professor Longfellow, entitled "The Good George Campbell" and purporting to be a translation from the German of O. L. B. Wolff. In "Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern," by William Motherwell, published by John Wylie, Glasgow, 1827, is to be found a poem partly compiled and partly written by Motherwell himself. It is entitled "The Bonnie George Campbell." I give the two side by side: —

MOTHERWELL	LONGFELLOW
"Hie upon Hielands, And low upon Tay, Bonnie George Campbell Rade out on a day. Saddled and bridled And gallant rade he; Hame cam his gude horse, But never cam he!	"High on the Highlands, And deep in the day, The good George Campbell Rode free and away. All saddled, all bridled, Gay garments he wore; Home came his good steed, But he nevermore!
"Out cam his auld mither Greeting fu' sair, And out cam his bonnie bride Rivin' her hair. Saddled and bridled And booted rade he; Toom hame cam the saddle, But never cam he.	"Out came his mother, Weeping so sadly! Out came his beauteous bride, Wailing so madly! All saddled, all bridled, Strong armor he wore; Home came the saddle, But he nevermore!

"'My meadow lies green,
And my corn is unshorn;
My barn is too big,
And my baby 's unborn.'
Saddled and bridled
And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
But never cam he!"

"'My meadow lies green,
Unreaped is my corn.
My garner is empty,
My child is unborn!'
All saddled, all bridled,
Sharp weapons he bore:
Home came the saddle,
But he nevermore!"

Professor Longfellow defends himself (I learn) from the charge of imitation in this case by the assertion that he did translate from Wolff, but that Wolff copied from Motherwell. I am willing to believe almost anything rather than so gross a plagiarism as this seems to be; but there are difficulties which should be cleared up. In the first place how happens it that, in the transmission from the Scotch into the German, and again from the German into the English, not only the versification should have been rigidly preserved, but the *rhymes*, and *alliterations?* Again; how are we to imagine that Mr. Longfellow with his known intimate acquaintance with Motherwell's "Minstrelsy" did not at once recognize so remarkable a poem when he met it in Wolff? I have now before me a large volume of songs, ballads, etc. collected by Wolff; but there is here no such poem — and, to be sure, it should not be sought in such a collection. No collection of his *own* poems has been published, and the piece of which we are in search must be fugitive — unless, indeed, it is included in a volume of *translations* from various tongues, of which O. L. B. Wolff is also the author — but of which I am unable to obtain a copy.[1] It is by no means improbable that here the poem in

[1] Sammlung vorzuglicher Volkslieder der bekanntesten Nationen, grostentheils zum ersten male metrisch in das Deutsche übertragen. Frankfurt, 1837.

question is to be found; but in this case it must have been plainly acknowledged as a translation, with its original designated. How, then, could Professor Longfellow have translated it as original with Wolff? These are mysteries yet to be solved. It is observable — peculiarly so — that the Scotch "Toom" is left untranslated in the version of "Graham's Magazine." Will it be found that the same omission occurs in Wolff's version?

In "The Spanish Student" of Mr. Longfellow, at page 80, will be found what follows: —

Scene IV. — PRECIOSA's chamber. She is sitting with a book in her hand near a table, on which are flowers. A bird singing in its cage. THE COUNT OF LARA enters behind, unperceived.

PRECIOSA (*reads*)

"All are sleeping, weary heart!
Thou, thou only sleepless art!"

Heigho! I wish Victorian were here.
I know not what it is makes me so restless! (*The bird sings.*)
Thou little prisoner with thy motley coat,
That from thy vaulted, wiry dungeon singest,
Like thee I am a captive, and, like thee,
I have a gentle jailer. Lack-a-day!

"All are sleeping, weary heart!
Thou, thou only sleepless art!
All this throbbing, all this aching,
Evermore shall keep thee waking,
For a heart in sorrow breaking
Thinketh ever of its smart!"

Thou speakest truly, poet! and methinks
More hearts are breaking in this world of ours
Than one would say. In distant villages
And solitudes remote, where winds have wafted
The barbèd seeds of love, or birds of passage
Scattered them in their flight, do they take root,
And grow in silence, and in silence perish.

Who hears the falling of the forest leaf?
Or who takes note of every flower that dies?
Heigho! I wish Victorian would come.
Dolores! (*Turns to lay down her book, and perceives the Count.*) Ha!

LARA

Señora, pardon me.

PRECIOSA

How's this? *Dolores!*

LARA

Pardon me—

PRECIOSA

Dolores!

LARA

Be not alarmed; I found no one in waiting.
If I have been too bold —

PRECIOSA (*turning her back upon him*)

You are too bold!
Retire! retire, and leave me!

LARA

My dear lady,
First hear me! I beseech you, let me speak!
'T is for your good I come.

PRECIOSA (*turning toward him with indignation*)

Begone! begone!
You are the Count of Lara, but your deeds
Would make the statues of your ancestors
Blush on their tombs! Is it Castilian honor,
Is it Castilian pride, to steal in here
Upon a friendless girl, to do her wrong?
Oh, shame! shame! shame! that you, a nobleman,
Should be so little noble in your thoughts
As to send *jewels* here to win my love,
And think to buy my honor with your gold!
I have no words to tell you how I scorn you!
Begone! the sight of you is hateful to me!
Begone, I say!

A few passages farther on, in the same scene, we meet the following stage directions: — "*He tries to embrace her; she starts back and draws a dagger from her bosom.*" A little farther still and "*Victorian enters behind.*" Compare all this with a "Scene from Politian, an Unpublished Tragedy by Edgar A. Poe," to be found in the second volume of the "Southern Literary Messenger."

The scene opens with the following stage directions:

A lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand-mirror. In the background JACINTA (a servant maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

LALAGE (*reading*)

"It in another climate, so he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!"
(*pauses, turns over some leaves, and resumes*)
"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower,
But Ocean ever to refresh mankind
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."
Oh, beautiful! most beautiful! how like
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!
O happy land! (*pauses*)
She died — the maiden died!
O still more happy maiden who couldst die!
Jacinta!
(JACINTA *returns no answer, and* LALAGE *presently resumes*)
Again, — a similar tale
Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea.
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play, —
"She died full young;" one Bossola answers him, —
"I think not so — her infelicity
Seemed to have years too many." — Ah, luckless lady!
Jacinta! (*still no answer*)
Here 's a far sterner story,
But like — oh, very like — in its despair,
Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily

A thousand hearts — losing at length her own.
She died. Thus endeth the history, and her maids
Lean over her and weep, two gentle maids
With gentle names — Eiros and Charmion:
Rainbow and Dove!
Jacinta! . . .

[JACINTA finally, in a discussion about certain jewels, insults her mistress, who bursts into tears]

LALAGE

Poor Lalage! and is it come to this? —
Thy servant maid! — but courage! — 't is but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!
(*taking up the mirror*)
Ha! here at least 's a friend — too much a friend
In earlier days — a friend will not deceive thee.
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale, a pretty tale — and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.
It speaks of sunken eyes and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased — remembers me
Of Joy departed — Hope, the seraph Hope,
Inurnèd and entombed: — now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true, thou liest not:
Thou hast no end to gain, no heart to break;
Castiglione lied who said he loved;
Thou true — he false, false, false!

(*while she speaks a monk enters her apartment, and approaches unobserved*)

MONK

Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter, in Heaven. Think of eternal things,
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

LALAGE (*arising hurriedly*)

I *cannot* pray! My soul is at war with God!
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses — go! I cannot pray;

The sweet airs from the garden worry me;
Thy presence grieves me — go! thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread, thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

MONK

Think of thy precious soul!

LALAGE

Think of my early days! think of my father
And mother in Heaven; think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door;
Think of my little sisters — think of them!
And think of me! think of my trusting love
And confidence — his vows — my ruin — think — think
Of my unspeakable misery! — begone!
Yet stay, yet stay! — what was it thou saidst of prayer
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne?

MONK

I did.

LALAGE

'T is well.
There *is* a vow were fitting should be made,
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,
A solemn vow.

MONK

Daughter, this zeal is well.

LALAGE

Father, this zeal is anything but well.
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing,
A crucifix whereon to register
This sacred vow? (*he hands her his own*)
Not that — oh, no! — no! — no! (*shuddering*)
Not that! not that! — I tell thee, holy man,
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me.
Stand back! I have a crucifix myself, —
I have a crucifix! Methinks 't were fitting
The deed, the vow, the symbol of the deed,

And the deed's register should tally, father!
(*draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high*)
Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine
Is written in Heaven!

MONK

Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy — thy lips are livid —
Thine eyes are wild — tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late! — oh, be not — be not rash!
Swear not the oath — oh, swear it not!

LALAGE

'T is sworn.

The coincidences here are too markedly peculiar to be gainsaid. The sitting at the table with books, etc., the flowers on the one hand, and the garden on the other, the presence of the pert maid, the reading aloud from the book, the pausing and commenting, the plaintiveness of what is read, in accordance with the sorrow of the reader, the abstraction, the frequent calling of the maid by name, the refusal of the maid to answer, the jewels, the "begone," the unseen entrance of a third person from behind, and the drawing of the dagger, are points sufficiently noticeable to establish at least the imitation beyond all doubt. Let us now compare the concluding lines of Mr. Longfellow's "Autumn" with that of Mr. Bryant's "Thanatopsis." Mr. Bryant has it thus: —

"So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

Mr. Longfellow thus : —

"For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death
Has lifted up for all that he shall go
To his long resting-place without a tear."

Again, in his "Prelude" to the "Voices of the Night," Mr. Longfellow says : —

"Look then into thine heart and write!"

Sir Philip Sidney in the "Astrophel and Stella" has:

"Foole, said my Muse to me, looke in thy heart and write!"

Again, in Longfellow's "Midnight Mass" we read:

"And the hooded clouds, like friars."

The Lady in Milton's "Comus" says : —

"When the gray-hooded Even
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed."

And again, these lines by Professor Longfellow will be remembered by everybody : —

"Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still like muffled drums are beating
Funeral marches to the grave."

But if any one will turn to page 66 of John Sharpe's edition of Henry Headley's "Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry," published at London in 1810, he will there find an "Exequy" on the death of his wife by Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, and therein also the following lines, where the author is speaking of following his wife *to the grave* : —

"But hark! *my pulse*, *like a soft drum*,
Beats my approach — tells thee I come!
And slow howe'er my *marches* be,
I shall at last sit down by thee."

Were I disposed, indeed, to push this subject any farther, I should have little difficulty in culling, from the works of the author of "Outre Mer," a score or two of imitations quite as palpable as any upon which I have insisted. The fact of the matter is, that the friends of Mr. Longfellow, so far from undertaking to talk about my "carping littleness" in charging Mr. Longfellow with imitation, should have given me credit, under the circumstances, for great moderation in charging him with imitation alone. Had I accused him, in loud terms, of manifest and continuous plagiarism, I should but have echoed the sentiment of every man of letters in the land beyond the immediate influence of the Longfellow coterie. And since I, "knowing what I know and seeing what I have seen"— submitting in my own person to accusations of plagiarism for the very sins of this gentleman against myself — since I contented myself, nevertheless, with simply setting forth the merits of the poet in the strongest light, whenever an opportunity was afforded me, can it be considered either decorous or equitable on the part of Professor Longfellow to beset me, upon my first adventuring an infinitesimal sentence of dispraise, with ridiculous anonymous letters from his friends, and moreover, with malice prepense, to instigate against me the pretty little witch entitled "Miss Walter," advising her and instructing her to pierce me to death with the needles of innumerable epigrams, rendered unnecessarily and therefore cruelly painful to my feelings, by being first carefully deprived of the point?

V

It should not be supposed that I feel myself individually aggrieved in the letter of "Outis." He has praised me even more than he has blamed. In replying to him, my design has been to place fairly and distinctly before the literary public certain principles of criticism for which I have been long contending, and which, through sheer misrepresentation, were in danger of being misunderstood.

Having brought the subject, in this view, to a close, I now feel at liberty to add a few words, by way of freeing myself of any suspicion of malevolence or discourtesy. The thesis of my argument, in general, has been the definition of the grounds on which a charge of plagiarism may be based, and of the species of ratiocination by which it is to be established; this is all. It will be seen by any one who shall take the trouble to read what I have written, that I make *no* charge of moral delinquency against either Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Aldrich, or Mr. Hood; indeed, lest in the heat of argument I may have uttered any words which may admit of being tortured into such an interpretation, I here fully disclaim them upon the spot.

In fact, the one strong point of defence for his friends has been unaccountably neglected by "Outis." To attempt the rebutting of a charge of plagiarism by the broad assertion that no such thing as plagiarism exists, is a sotticism, and no more; but there would have been nothing of unreason in rebutting the charge as urged either against Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Aldrich, or Mr. Hood, by the proposition that no true poet can

be guilty of a meanness — that the converse of the proposition is a contradiction in terms. Should there be found any one willing to dispute with me this point, I would decline the disputation on the ground that my arguments are no arguments *to him*.

It appears to me that what seems to be the gross inconsistency of plagiarism as perpetrated by a poet, is very easily thus resolved: — the poetic sentiment (even without reference to the poetic power) implies a peculiarly, perhaps an abnormally, keen appreciation of the beautiful, with a longing for its assimilation, or absorption, into the poetic identity. What the poet intensely admires becomes thus, in very fact, although only partially, a portion of his own intellect. It has a secondary origination within his own soul — an origination altogether apart, although springing from its primary origination from without. The poet is thus possessed by another's thought, and cannot be said to take of it possession. But, in either view, he thoroughly feels it as *his own*, and this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of its true, palpable origin in the volume from which he has derived it — an origin which, in the long lapse of years, it is almost impossible *not* to forget — for in the mean time the thought itself is forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it — it springs up with all the vigor of a new birth — its absolute originality is not even a matter of suspicion — and when the poet has written it and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one in the world more entirely astounded than himself. Now from what I have said it will be evident that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the

poetic sentiment — of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and in fact all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and palpable plagiarisms, we must search the works of the most eminent poets.

THE AMERICAN DRAMA

WILLIS'S "TORTESA" AND LONGFELLOW'S "SPANISH STUDENT"

A BIOGRAPHIST of Berryer calls him "*l'homme qui dans sa description demande la plus grande quantité possible d'antithèse*;" but that ever recurring topic, the decline of the drama, seems to have consumed, of late, more of the material in question than would have sufficed for a dozen prime ministers, even admitting them to be French. Every trick of thought, and every harlequinade of phrase, have been put in operation for the purpose "*de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas.*"

Ce qui n'est pas: — for the drama has *not declined.* The facts and the philosophy of the case seem to be these. The great opponent to progress is conservatism. In other words, the great adversary of Invention is Imitation; the propositions are in spirit identical. Just as an art is imitative, is it stationary. The most imitative arts are the most prone to repose, and the converse. Upon the utilitarian, upon the business arts, where necessity impels, invention, necessity's well-understood offspring, is ever in attendance. And the less we see of the mother, the less we behold of the child. No one complains of the decline of the art of engineering. Here the reason, which never retrogrades, or reposes, is called into play. But let us glance at

sculpture. We are not *worse*, here, than the ancients, let pedantry say what it may (the Venus of Canova is worth, at any time, two of that of Cleomenes), but it is equally certain that we have made, in general, no advances; and sculpture, properly considered, is perhaps the most imitative of all arts which have a right to the title of art at all. Looking next at painting, we find that we have to boast of progress only in the ratio of the inferior imitativeness of painting, when compared with sculpture. As far indeed as we have any means of judging, our improvement has been exceedingly little, and did we know anything of ancient art, in this department, we might be astonished at discovering that we had advanced even far less than we suppose. As regards architecture, whatever progress we have made has been precisely in those particulars which have no reference to imitation: — that is to say, we have improved the utilitarian and not the ornamental provinces of the art. Where reason predominated, we advanced; where mere feeling or taste was the guide, we remained as we were.

Coming to the drama, we shall see that in its mechanisms we have made progress, while in its spirituality we have done little or nothing for centuries certainly; and, perhaps, little or nothing for thousands of years. And this is because what we term the spirituality of the drama is precisely its imitative portion, is exactly that portion which distinguishes it as one of the principal of the imitative arts.

Sculptors, painters, dramatists, are, from the very nature of their material — their spiritual material — imitators, conservatists, prone to repose in old feeling and in antique taste. For this reason — and for this

reason only — the arts of sculpture, painting, and the drama have not advanced, or have advanced feebly, and inversely in the ratio of their imitativeness.

But it by no means follows that either has declined. All seem to have declined, because they have remained stationary while the multitudinous other arts (of reason) have flitted so rapidly by them. In the same manner the traveller by railroad can imagine that the trees by the wayside are retrograding. The trees in this case are absolutely stationary; but the drama has not been altogether so, although its progress has been so slight as not to interfere with the general effect — that of seeming retrogradation or decline.

This seeming retrogradation, however, is to all practical intents an absolute one. Whether the drama has declined, or whether it has merely remained stationary, is a point of no importance, so far as concerns the public encouragement of the drama. It is unsupported, in either case, because it does not deserve support.

But if this stagnation, or deterioration, grows out of the very idiosyncrasy of the drama itself, as one of the principal of the imitative arts, how is it possible that a remedy shall be applied, since it is clearly impossible to alter the nature of the art and yet leave it the art which it now is?

We have already spoken of the improvements effected in architecture in all its utilitarian departments, and in the drama at all the points of its mechanism. "Wherever reason predominates we advance; where mere feeling or taste is the guide, we remain as we are." We wish now to suggest that, by the engrafting of reason upon feeling and

taste, we shall be able, and thus alone shall be able, to force the modern drama into the production of any profitable fruit.

At present, what is it we do? We are content if, with feeling and taste, a dramatist does *as other dramatists have done.* The most successful of the more immediately modern playwrights has been Sheridan Knowles, and to play Sheridan Knowles seems to be the highest ambition of our writers for the stage. Now the author of "The Hunchback" possesses what we are weak enough to term the true "dramatic feeling," and this true dramatic feeling he has manifested in the most preposterous series of imitations of the Elizabethan drama by which ever mankind were insulted and begulled. Not only did he adhere to the old plots, the old characters, the old stage conventionalities throughout; but he went even so far as to persist in the obsolete phraseologies of the Elizabethan period; and just in proportion to his obstinacy and absurdity at all points did we pretend to like him the better, and pretend to consider him a great dramatist.

Pretend — for every particle of it was pretence. Never was enthusiasm more utterly false than that which so many "respectable audiences" endeavored to get up for these plays — endeavored to get up, first, because there was a general desire to see the drama revive, and secondly, because we had been all along entertaining the fancy that "the decline of the drama" meant little, if anything, else than its deviation from the Elizabethan routine, and that, consequently, the return to the Elizabethan routine was, and of necessity must be, the revival of the drama.

But if the principles we have been at some trouble in

explaining are true — and most profoundly do we feel them to be so — if the spirit of imitation is, in fact, the real source of the drama's stagnation, and if it is so because of the tendency in all imitation to render reason subservient to feeling and to taste, it is clear that only by deliberate counteracting of the spirit, and of the tendency of the spirit, we can hope to succeed in the drama's revival.

The first thing necessary is to burn or bury the "old models," and to forget, as quickly as possible, that ever a play has been penned. The second thing is to consider *de novo* what are the capabilities of the drama — not merely what hitherto have been its conventional purposes. The third and last point has reference to the composition of a play (showing to the fullest extent these capabilities) conceived and constructed with feeling and with taste, but with feeling and taste guided and controlled in every particular by the details of reason — of common-sense — in a word, of a natural art.

It is obvious, in the mean time, that towards the good end in view much may be effected by discriminative criticism on what has already been done. The field, thus stated, is of course, practically illimitable; and to Americans the American drama is the special point of interest. We propose, therefore, in a series of papers, to take a somewhat deliberate survey of some few of the most noticeable American plays. We shall do this without reference either to the date of the composition, or its adaptation for the closet or the stage. We shall speak with absolute frankness both of merits and defects — our principal object being understood not as that of mere commentary on the individual play, but on the drama in general, and

on the American drama in especial, of which each individual play is a constituent part. We will commence at once with

"TORTESA, THE USURER."

This is the third dramatic attempt of Mr. Willis, and may be regarded as particularly successful, since it has received, both on the stage and in the closet, no stinted measure of commendation. This success, as well as the high reputation of the author, will justify us in a more extended notice of the play than might, under other circumstances, be desirable.

The story runs thus: — Tortesa, an usurer of Florence, and whose character is a mingled web of good and evil feelings, gets into his possession the palace and lands of a certain Count Falcone. The usurer would wed the daughter (Isabella) of Falcone not through love, but, in his own words,

"To please a devil that inhabits him;"

in fact, to mortify the pride of the nobility, and avenge himself of their scorn. He therefore bargains with Falcone (a narrow-souled villain) for the hand of Isabella. The deed of the Falcone property is restored to the Count, upon an agreement that the lady shall marry the usurer — this contract being invalid should Falcone change his mind in regard to the marriage or should the maiden demur, but valid should the wedding be prevented through any fault of Tortesa or through any accident not springing from the will of the father or child. The first scene makes us aware of this bargain, and introduces us to Zippa, a glover's daughter, who resolves with a view of befriending Isabella to feign a love for Tortesa (which, in fact, she partially feels), hoping thus to break off the match.

The second scene makes us acquainted with a young painter (Angelo), poor, but of high talents and ambition, and with his servant (Tomaso), an old bottle-loving rascal, entertaining no very exalted opinion of his master's abilities. Tomaso does some injury to a picture, and Angelo is about to run him through the body, when he is interrupted by a sudden visit from the Duke of Florence, attended by Falcone. The Duke is enraged at the murderous attempt, but admires the paintings in the studio. Finding that the rage of the great man will prevent his patronage if he knows the aggressor as the artist, Angelo passes off Tomaso as himself (Angelo), making an exchange of names. This is a point of some importance, as it introduces the true Angelo to a job which he had long coveted — the painting of the portrait of Isabella, of whose beauty he had become enamoured through report. The Duke wishes the portrait painted. Falcone, however, on account of a promise to Tortesa, would have objected to admit to his daughter's presence the handsome Angelo, but in regard to Tomaso has no scruple. Supposing Tomaso to be Angelo and the artist, the Count writes a note to Isabella, requiring her "to admit the painter Angelo." The real Angelo is thus admitted. He and the lady love at first sight (much in the manner of Romeo and Juliet), each ignorant of the other's attachment.

The third scene of the second act is occupied with a conversation between Falcone and Tortesa, during which a letter arrives from the Duke, who, having heard of the intended sacrifice of Isabella, offers to redeem the Count's lands and palace, and desires him to preserve his daughter for a certain Count Julian. But Isabella — who, before seeing Angelo, had been

willing to sacrifice herself for her father's sake, and who, since seeing him, had entertained hopes of escaping the hateful match through means of a plot entered into by herself and Zippa — Isabella, we say, is now in despair. To gain time, she at once feigns a love for the usurer, and indignantly rejects the proposal of the Duke. The hour for the wedding draws near. The lady has prepared a sleeping potion, whose effects resemble those of death (Romeo and Juliet). She swallows it, knowing that her supposed corpse would lie at night, pursuant to an old custom, in the sanctuary of the cathedral; and believing that Angelo, whose love for herself she has elicited by a stratagem from his own lips, will watch by the body in the strength of his devotion. Her ultimate design (we may suppose, for it is not told) is to confess all to her lover on her revival, and throw herself upon his protection — their marriage being concealed, and herself regarded as dead by the world. Zippa, who *really* loves Angelo (her love for Tortesa, it must be understood, is a very equivocal feeling, for the fact cannot be denied that Mr. Willis makes her love both at the same time), Zippa, who really loves Angelo (who has discovered his passion for Isabella) and who, as well as that lady, believes that the painter will watch the corpse in the cathedral, — determines, through jealousy, to prevent his so doing, and with this view informs Tortesa that she has learned it to be Angelo's design to steal the body, *for artistical purposes* — in short, as a model to be used in his studio. The usurer, in consequence, sets a guard at the doors of the cathedral. This guard does, in fact, prevent the lover from watching the corpse; but, it appears, does *not* prevent the lady, on her revival and disappointment

in not seeing the one she sought, from passing unperceived from the church. Weakened by her long sleep, she wanders aimlessly through the streets, and at length finds herself, when just sinking with exhaustion, at the door of her father. She has no resource but to knock. The Count, who here, we must say, acts very much as Thimble of old — the knight, we mean, of the "scolding wife" — maintains that she is dead, and shuts the door in her face. In other words, he supposes it to be the ghost of his daughter who speaks; and so the lady is left to perish on the steps. Meantime Angelo is absent from home, attempting to get access to the cathedral; and his servant Tomaso takes the opportunity of absenting himself also and of indulging his bibulous propensities while perambulating the town. He finds Isabella as we left her; and through motives which we will leave Mr. Willis to explain conducts her unresistingly to Angelo's residence and — *deposits her in Angelo's bed.* The artist now returns — Tomaso is kicked out of doors — and we are not told, but left to presume, that a full explanation and perfect understanding are brought about between the lady and her lover.

We find them, next morning, in the studio, where stands, leaning against an easel, the portrait (a full length) of Isabella, with curtains adjusted before it. The stage-directions, moreover, inform us that "the back wall of the room is such as to form a natural ground for the picture." While Angelo is occupied in retouching it, he is interrupted by the arrival of Tortesa with a guard, and is accused of having stolen the corpse from the sanctuary, the lady, meanwhile, having stepped behind the curtain. The usurer insists upon seeing the painting, with a view of ascer-

taining whether any new touches had been put upon it, which would argue an examination, *post mortem*, of those charms of neck and bosom which the living Isabella would not have unveiled. Resistance is vain — the curtain is torn down; but to the surprise of Angelo, the lady herself is discovered, "with her hands crossed on her breast, and her eyes fixed on the ground, standing motionless in the frame which had contained the picture." The *tableau*, we are to believe, deceives Tortesa, who steps back to contemplate what he supposes to be the portrait of his betrothed. In the mean time the guards, having searched the house, find the veil which had been thrown over the imagined corpse in the sanctuary; and, upon this evidence, the artist is carried before the Duke. Here he is accused, not only of sacrilege, but of the murder of Isabella, and is about to be condemned to death, when his mistress comes forward in person; thus resigning herself to the usurer to save the life of her lover. But the nobler nature of Tortesa now breaks forth; and, smitten with admiration of the lady's conduct, as well as convinced that her love for himself was feigned, he resigns her to Angelo — although now feeling and acknowledging for the first time that a fervent love has, in his own bosom, assumed the place of this misanthropic ambition which, hitherto, had alone actuated him in seeking her hand. Moreover, he endows Isabella with the lands of her father Falcone. The lovers are thus made happy. The usurer weds Zippa; and the curtain drops upon the promise of the Duke to honor the double nuptials with his presence.

This story, as we have given it, hangs better together (Mr. Willis will pardon our modesty) and is altogether more easily comprehended than in the

words of the play itself. We have really put the best face upon the matter, and presented the whole in the simplest and clearest light in our power. We mean to say that "Tortesa" (partaking largely, in this respect, of the drama of Cervantes and Calderon) is over-clouded — rendered misty — by a world of unnecessary and impertinent intrigue. This folly was adopted by the Spanish comedy, and is imitated by us, with the idea of imparting "action," "business," "vivacity." But vivacity, however desirable, can be attained in many other ways, and is dearly purchased, indeed, when the price is intelligibility.

The truth is that *cant* has never attained a more owl-like dignity than in the discussion of dramatic principle. A modern stage critic is nothing, if not a lofty contemner of all things simple and direct. He delights in mystery, revels in mystification, has transcendental notions concerning P. S. and O. P., and talks about "stage business and stage effect," as if he were discussing the differential calculus. For much of all this we are indebted to the somewhat over-profound criticisms of Augustus William Schlegel.

But the *dicta* of common-sense are of universal application; and, touching this matter of intrigue, if, from its superabundance, we are compelled, even in the quiet and critical perusal of a play, to pause frequently and reflect long, to re-read passages over and over again for the purpose of gathering their bearing upon the whole, of maintaining in our mind a general connection, what but fatigue can result from the exertion? How then when we come to the representation? — when these passages, trifling, perhaps, in themselves, but important when considered in relation to the plot, are hurried and blurred over in the stut-

tering enunciation of some miserable rantipole, or omitted altogether through the constitutional lapse of memory so peculiar to those lights of the age and stage, bedight (from being of no conceivable use) supernumeraries? For it must be borne in mind that these bits of intrigue (we use the term in the sense of the German critics) appertain generally, indeed altogether, to the after-thoughts of the drama, to the underplots; are met with, consequently, in the mouth of the lackeys and chamber-maids; and are thus consigned to the tender mercies of the *stellæ minores*. Of course we get but an imperfect idea of what is going on before our eyes. Action after action ensues whose mystery we cannot unlock without the little key which these barbarians have thrown away and lost. Our weariness increases in proportion to the number of these embarrassments, and if the play escape damnation at all, it escapes *in spite* of that intrigue to which, in nine cases out of ten, the author attributes his success, and which he will persist in valuing exactly in proportion to the misapplied labor it has cost him.

But dramas of this kind are said, in our customary parlance, to "abound in plot." We have never yet met any one, however, who could tell us what precise ideas he connected with the phrase. A mere succession of incidents, even the most spirited, will no more constitute a plot, than a multiplication of zeros, even the most infinite, will result in the production of a unit. This all will admit — but few trouble themselves to think farther. The common notion seems to be in favor of mere complexity; but a plot, properly understood, is perfect only inasmuch as we shall find ourselves unable to detach from it or disarrange any

single incident involved, without destruction to the mass. This we say is the point of perfection — a point never yet attained, but not on that account unattainable. Practically, we may consider a plot as of high excellence, when no one of its component parts shall be susceptible of removal without detriment to the whole. Here, indeed, is a vast lowering of the demand; and with less than this no writer of refined taste should content himself.

As this subject is not only in itself of great importance, but will have at all points a bearing upon what we shall say hereafter, in the examination of various plays, we shall be pardoned for quoting from the "Democratic Review" some passages (of our own) which enter more particularly into the rationale of the subject: —

All the Bridgewater treatises have failed in noticing the *great* idiosyncrasy in the Divine system of adaptation; that idiosyncrasy which stamps the adaptation as divine, in distinction from that which is the work of merely human constructiveness. I speak of the complete *mutuality* of adaptation. For example: — in human constructions, a particular cause has a particular effect, a particular purpose brings about a particular object; but we see no reciprocity. The effect does not react upon the cause, the object does not change relations with the purpose. In Divine constructions, the object is either object or purpose as we choose to regard it, while the purpose is either purpose or object; so that we can never (abstractly, without concretion, without reference to facts of the moment) decide which is which.

For secondary example: — In polar climates, the human frame, to maintain its animal heat, requires, for combustion in the capillary system, an abundant supply of highly azotized food, such as train oil. Again: — in polar cli-

mates nearly the sole food afforded man is the oil of abundant seals and whales. Now whether is oil at hand because imperatively demanded? or whether is it the only thing demanded because the only thing to be obtained? It is impossible to say: — there is an absolute reciprocity of adaptation for which we seek in vain among the works of man.

The Bridgewater tractists may have avoided this point, on account of its apparent tendency to overthrow the idea of *cause* in general, consequently of a First Cause, of God. But it is more probable that they have failed to perceive what no one preceding them has, to my knowledge, perceived.

The pleasure which we derive from any exertion of human ingenuity is in the direct ratio of the approach to this species of reciprocity between cause and effect. In the construction of plot, for example, in fictitious literature, we should aim at so arranging the points, or incidents, that we cannot distinctly see, in respect to any one of them, whether that one depends from any one other or upholds it. In this sense, of course, perfection of plot is unattainable *in fact* — because Man is the constructor. The plots of God are perfect. The Universe is a plot of God.

The pleasure derived from the contemplation of the unity resulting from plot is far more intense than is ordinarily supposed, and, as in Nature we meet with no such combination of *incident*, appertains to a very lofty region of the ideal. In speaking thus we have not said that plot is more than an adjunct to the drama, more than a perfectly distinct and separable source of pleasure. It is *not* an essential. In its intense artificiality it may even be conceived injurious in a certain degree (unless constructed with consummate skill) to that real *lifelikeness* which is the soul of the drama of character. Good dramas have been written with very little plot; capital dramas might be written

with none at all. Some plays of high merit, having plot, abound in irrelevant incident, — in incident, we mean, which could be displaced or removed altogether without effect upon the plot itself and yet are by no means objectionable as dramas ; and for this reason, — that the incidents are evidently irrelevant, — obviously episodical. Of their digressive nature the spectator is so immediately aware that he views them, as they arise, in the simple light of interlude, and does not fatigue his attention by attempting to establish for them a connection, or more than an illustrative connection, with the great interests of the subject. Such are the plays of Shakespeare. But all this is very different from that irrelevancy of intrigue which disfigures and very usually damns the work of the unskilful artist. With him the great error lies in *inconsequence.* Underplot is piled upon underplot (the very word is a paradox), and all to no purpose — *to no end.* The interposed incidents have no ultimate effect upon the main ones. They may hang upon the mass, they may even coalesce with it; or, as in some intricate cases, they may be so intimately blended as to be lost amid the chaos which they have been instrumental in bringing about; but still they have no portion in the plot, which exists, if at all, independently of their influence. Yet the attempt is made by the author to establish and demonstrate a dependence, an identity; and it is the obviousness of this attempt which is the cause of weariness in the spectator, who, of course, cannot at once see that his attention is challenged to no purpose, — that intrigues so obtrusively forced upon it are to be found in the end without effect upon the leading interests of the play.

" Tortesa " will afford us plentiful examples of this

irrelevancy of intrigue, of this misconception of the nature and of the capacities of plot. We have said that our digest of the story is more easy of comprehension than the detail of Mr. Willis. If so, it is because we have forborne to give such portions as had no influence upon the whole. These served but to embarrass the narrative and fatigue the attention. How much was irrelevant is shown by the brevity of the space in which we have recorded, somewhat at length, all the influential incidents of a drama of five acts. There is scarcely a scene in which is not to be found the germ of an underplot — a germ, however, which seldom proceeds beyond the condition of a bud, or, if so fortunate as to swell into a flower, arrives in no single instance at the dignity of fruit. Zippa, a lady altogether without character (dramatic), is the most pertinacious of all conceivable concocters of plans never to be matured, of vast designs that terminate in nothing, of cul-de-sac machinations. She plots in one page and counterplots in the next. She schemes her way from P. S. to O. P., and intrigues perseveringly from the footlights to the slips. A very singular instance of the inconsequence of her manœuvres is found towards the conclusion of the play. The whole of the second scene (occupying five pages), in the fifth act, is obviously introduced for the purpose of giving her information, through Tomaso's means, of Angelo's arrest for the murder of Isabella. Upon learning his danger, she rushes from the stage to be present at the trial, exclaiming that her evidence can save his life. We, the audience, of course applaud, and now look with interest to her movements in the scene of the judgment hall. She, Zippa, we think, is somebody after all; she will be the means of Angelo's

salvation; she will thus be the chief unraveller of the plot. All eyes are bent, therefore, upon Zippa; but alas, upon the point at issue, Zippa does not so much as open her mouth. It is scarcely too much to say that not a single action of this impertinent little busybody has any real influence upon the play; yet she appears upon every occasion, appearing only to perplex.

Similar things abound; we should not have space even to allude to them all. The whole conclusion of the play is supererogatory. The immensity of pure *fuss* with which it is overloaded forces us to the reflection that all of it might have been avoided by one word of explanation to the Duke — an amiable man who admires the talents of Angelo, and who, to prevent Isabella's marrying against her will, had previously offered to free Falcone of his bonds to the usurer. That he would free him now, and thus set all matters straight, the spectator cannot doubt for an instant, and he can conceive no better reason why explanations are not made than that Mr. Willis does not think proper they should be. In fact, the whole drama is exceedingly ill *motivirt*.

We have already mentioned an inadvertence, in the fourth act, where Isabella is made to escape from the sanctuary through the midst of guards who prevented the ingress of Angelo. Another occurs where Falcone's conscience is made to reprove him, upon the appearance of his daughter's supposed ghost, for having occasioned her death by forcing her to marry against her will. The author had forgotten that Falcone submitted to the wedding, after the Duke's interposition, only upon Isabella's assurance that she really loved the usurer. In the third scene, too, of the first

act, the imagination of the spectator is no doubt a little taxed, when he finds Angelo, in the first moment of his introduction to the palace of Isabella, commencing her portrait by laying on color after color before he has made any attempt at an outline. In the last act, moreover, Tortesa gives to Isabella a deed

> "Of the Falcone palaces and lands,
> And all the money forfeit by Falcone."

This is a terrible blunder, and the more important as upon this act of the usurer depends the development of his new-born sentiments of honor and virtue — depends, in fact, the most salient point of the play. Tortesa, we say, gives to Isabella the lands forfeited by Falcone; but Tortesa was surely not very generous in giving what, clearly, was not his own to give. Falcone had not forfeited the deed, which had been restored to him by the usurer, and which was then in his (Falcone's) possession. Hear Tortesa: —

> "He put it in the bond,
> *That if, by any humor of my own,*
> Or accident that came not from himself,
> Or from his daughter's will, the match were marred,
> *His tenure stood intact.*"

Now Falcone is still resolute for the match; but this new generous "humor" of Tortesa induces him (Tortesa) to decline it. Falcone's tenure is then intact; he retains the deed, the usurer is giving away property not his own.

As a drama of character, "Tortesa" is by no means open to so many objections as when we view it in the light of its plot; but it is still faulty. The merits are so exceedingly negative that it is difficult to say anything about them. The Duke is nobody; Falcone, nothing; Zippa, less than nothing. Angelo may be

regarded simply as the medium through which Mr. Willis conveys to the reader his own glowing feelings, his own refined and delicate fancy (delicate, yet bold), his own rich voluptuousness of sentiment — a voluptuousness which would offend in almost any other language than that in which it is so skilfully apparelled. Isabella is — the heroine of "The Hunchback." The revolution in the character of Tortesa — or rather the final triumph of his innate virtue — is a dramatic point far older than the hills. It may be observed, too, that although the representation of no human character should be quarrelled with for its inconsistency, we yet require that the inconsistencies be not absolute antagonisms to the extent of neutralization; they may be permitted to be oils and waters, but they must not be alkalies and acids. When, in the course of the *dénouement*, the usurer bursts forth into an eloquence virtue-inspired, we cannot sympathize very heartily in his fine speeches, since they proceed from the mouth of the self-same egotist who, urged by a disgusting vanity, uttered so many sotticisms (about his fine legs, etc.) in the earlier passages of the play. Tomaso is, upon the whole, the best personage. We recognize some originality in his conception, and conception was seldom more admirably carried out.

One or two observations at random. In the third scene of the fifth act, Tomaso, the buffoon, is made to assume paternal authority over Isabella (as usual, without sufficient purpose) by virtue of a law which Tortesa thus expounds:—

> "My gracious liege, there is a law in Florence,
> That if a father, for no guilt or shame,
> Disown and shut his door upon his daughter,

She is the child of him who succors her,
Who by the shelter of a single night,
Becomes endowed with the authority
Lost by the other."

No one, of course, can be made to believe that any such stupid law as this ever existed either in Florence or Timbuctoo; but, on the ground *que le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*, we say that even its real existence would be no justification of Mr. Willis. It has an air of the far-fetched, of the desperate, which a fine taste will avoid as a pestilence. Very much of the same nature is the attempt of Tortesa to extort a second bond from Falcone. The evidence which convicts Angelo of murder is ridiculously frail. The idea of Isabella's assuming the place of the portrait, and so deceiving the usurer, is not only glaringly improbable, but seems adopted from the "Winter's Tale." But in this latter play, the deception is at least possible, for the human figure but imitates a statue. What, however, are we to make of Mr. Willis's stage direction about the back wall's being "so arranged as to form a natural ground for the picture"? Of course the very slightest movement of Tortesa (and he makes many) would have annihilated the illusion by disarranging the perspective; and in no manner could this latter have been arranged at all for more than one particular point of view — in other words, for more than one particular person in the whole audience. The "asides," moreover, are unjustifiably frequent. The prevalence of this folly (of speaking aside) detracts as much from the acting merit of our drama generally as any other inartisticality. It utterly destroys verisimilitude. People are not in the habit of soliloquizing aloud — at least, not to any positive extent; and

why should an author have to be told, what the slightest reflection would teach him, that an audience, by dint of no imagination, can or will conceive that what is sonorous in their own ears at the distance of fifty feet cannot be heard by an actor at the distance of one or two?

Having spoken thus of "Tortesa" in terms of nearly unmitigated censure, our readers may be surprised to hear us say that we think highly of the drama as a whole, and have little hesitation in ranking it before most of the dramas of Sheridan Knowles. Its leading faults are those of the modern drama generally — they are not peculiar to itself — while its great merits *are*. If, in support of our opinion, we do not cite points of commendation, it is because those form the mass of the work. And were we to speak of fine passages, we should speak of the entire play. Nor by "fine passages" do we mean passages of merely fine language embodying fine sentiment, but such as are replete with truthfulness and teem with the loftiest qualities of the dramatic art. *Points* — capital points abound; and these have far more to do with the general excellence of a play than a too speculative criticism has been willing to admit. Upon the whole, we are proud of "Tortesa;" and here again, for the fiftieth time at least, record our warm admiration of the abilities of Mr. Willis.

We proceed now to Mr. Longfellow's

"Spanish Student"

The reputation of its author as a poet, and as a graceful writer of prose, is, of course, long and deservedly established; but as a dramatist he was unknown before the publication of this play. Upon

its original appearance, in "Graham's Magazine," the general opinion was greatly in favor — if not exactly of "The Spanish Student" — at all events of the writer of "Outre-Mer." But this general opinion is the most equivocal thing in the world. It is never self-formed. It has very seldom indeed an original development. In regard to the work of an already famous or infamous author it decides, to be sure, with a laudable promptitude; making up all the mind that it has, by reference to the reception of the author's immediately previous publication; making up thus the ghost of a mind *pro tem.*, a species of critical shadow, that fully answers, nevertheless, all the purposes of a substance itself, until the substance itself shall be forthcoming. But, beyond this point, the general opinion can only be considered that of the public, as a man may call a book *his*, having bought it. When a new writer arises, the shop of the true, thoughtful, or critical opinion is not simultaneously thrown away, is not immediately set up. Some weeks elapse; and, during this interval, the public, at a loss where to procure an opinion of the *débutante*, have necessarily no opinion of him at all, for the nonce.

The popular voice, then, which ran so much in favor of "The Spanish Student," upon its original issue, should be looked upon as merely the ghost *pro tem.*, as based upon critical decisions respecting the previous works of the author, as having reference in no manner to "The Spanish Student" itself, and thus as utterly meaningless and valueless *per se.*

The few, by which we mean those who think, in contradistinction from the many who think they think, the few who think at first hand, and thus twice before

speaking at all — these received the play with a commendation somewhat less *prononcée*, somewhat more guardedly qualified, than Professor Longfellow might have desired or may have been taught to expect. Still the composition was approved upon the whole. The few words of censure were very far, indeed, from amounting to condemnation. The chief defect insisted upon was the feebleness of the *dénouement*, and, generally, of the concluding scenes, as compared with the opening passages. We are not sure, however, that anything like detailed criticism has been attempted in the case — nor do we propose now to attempt it. Nevertheless, the work has interest, not only within itself, but as the first dramatic effort of an author who has remarkably succeeded in almost every other department of light literature than that of the drama. It may be as well, therefore, to speak of it, if not analytically, at least somewhat in detail; and we cannot, perhaps, more suitably commence than by a quotation, without comment, of some of the finer passages: —

"And, though she is a virgin outwardly,
Within she is a sinner; like those panels
Of doors and altar-pieces the old monks
Painted in convents, with the Virgin Mary
On the outside, and on the inside Venus."

"I believe
That woman, in her deepest degradation,
Holds something sacred, something undefiled,
Some pledge and keepsake of her higher nature,
And, like the diamond in the dark, retains
Some quenchless gleam of the celestial light!"

"And we shall sit together unmolested,
And words of true love pass from tongue to tongue,
As singing birds from one bough to another."

"Our feelings and our thoughts
Tend ever on and rest not in the Present.
As drops of rain fall into some dark well,
And from below comes a scarce audible sound,
So fall our thoughts into the dark Hereafter,
And their mysterious echo reaches us."

"Her tender limbs are still, and, on her breast,
The cross she prayed to, ere she fell asleep,
Rises or falls with the soft tide of dreams,
Like a light barge safe moored."

"Hark! how the large and ponderous mace of Time
Knocks at the golden portals of the day!"

"The lady Violante, bathed in tears
Of love and anger, like the maid of Colchis,
Whom thou, another faithless Argonaut,
Having won that golden fleece, a woman's love,
Desertest for this Glaucè."

Must read, or sit in revery and watch
The changing color of the waves that break
Upon the idle sea-shore of the mind."

"I will forget her. All dear recollections
Pressed in my heart, like flowers within a book,
Shall be torn out and scattered to the winds."

"O yes! I see it now,
Yet rather with my heart than with mine eyes,
So faint it is. And all my thoughts sail thither,
Freighted with prayers and hopes, and forward urged
Against all stress of accident, as, in
The Eastern Tale, against the wind and tide
Great ships were drawn to the Magnetic Mountains."

"But there are brighter dreams than those of Fame,
Which are the dreams of Love! Out of the heart
Rises the bright ideal of these dreams,
As from some woodland fount a spirit rises
And sinks again into its silent deeps,
Ere the enamoured knight can touch her robe!
'T is this ideal that the soul of man,

Like the enamoured knight beside the fountain,
Waits for upon the margin of Life's stream;
Waits to behold her rise from the dark waters,
Clad in a mortal shape! Alas, how many
Must wait in vain! The stream flows evermore,
But from its silent deeps no spirit rises!
Yet I, born under a propitious star,
Have found the bright ideal of my dreams."

"Yes; by the Darro's side
My childhood passed. I can remember still
The river, and the mountains capped with snow;
The villages where, yet a little child,
I told the traveller's fortune in the street;
The smuggler's horse, the brigand and the shepherd;
The march across the moor; the halt at noon;
The red fire of the evening camp, that lighted
The forest where we slept; and, further back,
As in a dream or in some former life,
Gardens and palace walls."

"This path will lead us to it,
Over the wheat-fields, where the shadows sail
Across the running sea, now green, now blue,
And, like an idle mariner on the ocean,
Whistles the quail."

These extracts will be universally admired. They are graceful, well expressed, imaginative, and altogether replete with the true poetic feeling. We quote them now, at the beginning of our review, by way of justice to the poet, and because, in what follows, we are not sure that we have more than a very few words of what may be termed commendation to bestow.

"The Spanish Student" has an unfortunate beginning, in a most unpardonable, and yet, to render the matter worse, in a most indispensable "Preface":

"The subject of the following play [says Mr. Longfellow] is taken in part from the beautiful play of

Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. To this source, however, I am indebted for the main incident only, the love of a Spanish student for a Gypsy girl, and the name of the heroine, Preciosa. I have not followed the story in any of its details. In Spain this subject has been twice handled dramatically; first by Juan Perez de Montalvan, in *La Gitanilla*, and afterwards by Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneira in *La Gitanilla de Madrid*. The same subject has also been made use of by Thomas Middleton, an English dramatist of the seventeenth century. His play is called, *The Spanish Gypsy*. The main plot is the same as in the Spanish pieces; but there runs through it a tragic underplot of the loves of Rodrigo and Doña Clara, which is taken from another tale of Cervantes, *La Fuerza de la Sangre*. The reader who is acquainted with *La Gitanilla* of Cervantes, and the plays of Montalvan, Solis, and Middleton, will perceive that my treatment of the subject differs entirely from theirs."

Now the authorial originality, properly considered, is threefold. There is, first, the originality of the general thesis; secondly, that of the several incidents, or thoughts, by which the thesis is developed; and, thirdly, that of manner, or tone, by which means alone, an old subject, even when developed through hackneyed incidents, or thoughts, may be made to produce a fully original effect — which, after all, is the end truly in view.

But originality, as it is one of the highest, is also one of the rarest of merits. In America it is especially and very remarkably rare: — this through causes sufficiently well understood. We are content perforce, therefore, as a general thing, with either of the lower branches of originality mentioned above, and would regard with high favor, indeed, any author who should

supply the great desideratum in combining the three. Still the three should be combined; and from whom, if not from such men as Professor Longfellow — if not from those who occupy the chief niches in our Literary Temple — shall we expect the combination? But in the present instance, what has Professor Longfellow accomplished? Is he original at any one point? Is he original in respect to the first and most important of our three divisions? "The *subject* of the following play," he says himself, "is taken *in part* from the beautiful play of Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*." "To this source, however, I am indebted for *the main incident only*, the love of the Spanish student for a Gypsy girl, and the name of the heroine, Preciosa."

The italics are our own, and the words italicised involve an obvious contradiction. We cannot understand how "the love of the Spanish student for a Gypsy girl" can be called an "incident," or even a "main incident," at all. In fact, this love — this discordant and therefore eventful or incidental love — is the true *thesis* of the drama of Cervantes. It is this anomalous "love" which originates the incidents by means of which, itself, this "love," the thesis, is developed. Having based his play, then, upon this "love," we cannot admit his claim to originality upon our first count; nor has he any right to say that he has adopted his "subject" "in part." It is clear that he has adopted it altogether. Nor would he have been entitled to claim originality of subject, even had he based his story upon *any variety* of love arising between parties naturally separated by prejudices of *caste* — such, for example, as those which divide the Brahmin from the Pariah, the Ammonite from the African, or even the Christian from the Jew. For

here in its ultimate analysis is the real thesis of the Spaniard. But when the drama is founded, not merely upon this general thesis, but upon this general thesis in the identical application given it by Cervantes — that is to say, upon the prejudice of caste exemplified in the case of a Catholic, and this Catholic a Spaniard, and this Spaniard a student, and this student loving a Gypsy, and this Gypsy a dancing-girl, and this dancing-girl bearing the name Preciosa — we are not altogether prepared to be informed by Professor Longfellow that he is indebted for an "incident only" to the "beautiful *Gitanilla* of Cervantes."

Whether our author is original upon our second and third points — in the true incidents of his story, or in the manner and tone of their handling — will be more distinctly seen as we proceed.

It is to be regretted that "The Spanish Student" was not sub-entitled "A Dramatic Poem" rather than "A Play." The former title would have more fully conveyed the intention of the poet; for, of course, we shall not do Mr. Longfellow the injustice to suppose that his design has been, in any respect, *a play*, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Whatever may be its merits in a merely poetical view, "The Spanish Student" could not be endured upon the stage.

Its plot runs thus: — Preciosa, the daughter of a Spanish gentleman, is stolen, while an infant, by Gypsies; brought up as his own daughter, and as a dancing-girl, by a Gypsy leader, Cruzado; and by him betrothed to a young Gypsy, Bartolomé. At Madrid, Preciosa loves and is beloved by Victorian, a student of Alcalá, who resolves to marry her, notwithstanding her caste, rumors involving her purity, the dissuasions of his friends, and his betrothal to an heiress of

Madrid. Preciosa is also sought by the Count of Lara, a *roué*. She rejects him. He forces his way into her chamber, and is there seen by Victorian, who, misinterpreting some words overheard, doubts the fidelity of his mistress, and leaves her in anger, after challenging the Count of Lara. In the duel, the Count receives his life at the hands of Victorian; declares his ignorance of the understanding between Victorian and Preciosa; boasts of favors received from the latter; and, to make good his words, produces a ring which she gave him, he asserts, as a pledge of her love. This ring is a duplicate of one previously given the girl by Victorian, and known to have been so given by the Count. Victorian mistakes it for his own, believes all that has been said, and abandons the field to his rival, who, immediately afterwards, while attempting to procure access to the Gypsy, is assassinated by Bartolomé. Meanwhile, Victorian, wandering through the country, reaches Guadarrama. Here he receives a letter from Madrid, disclosing the treachery practised by Lara, and telling that Preciosa, rejecting his addresses, had been, through his instrumentality, hissed from the stage, and now again roamed with the Gypsies. He goes in search of her; finds her in a wood near Guadarrama ; approaches her, disguising his voice; she recognizes him, pretending she does not, and unaware that he knows her innocence; a conversation of equivoque ensues; he sees his ring upon her finger; offers to purchase it; she refuses to part with it; a full *éclaircissement* takes place; at this juncture, a servant of Victorian's arrives with "news from court," giving the first intimation of the true parentage of Preciosa. The lovers set out, forthwith, from Madrid, to see the newly discov-

ered father. On the route, Bartolomé dogs their steps; fires at Preciosa; misses her; the shot is returned; he falls; and "The Spanish Student" is concluded.

This plot, however, like that of "Tortesa," looks better in our naked digest than amidst the details which develop only to disfigure it. The reader of the play itself will be astonished, when he remembers the name of the author, at the inconsequence of the incidents, at the utter want of skill — of art — manifested in their conception and introduction. In dramatic writing, no principle is more clear than that nothing should be said or done which has not a tendency to develop the catastrophe, or the characters. But Mr. Longfellow's play abounds in events and conversations that have no ostensible purpose, and certainly answer no end. In what light, for example, since we cannot suppose this drama intended for the stage, are we to regard the second scene of the second act, where a long dialogue between an Archbishop and a Cardinal is wound up by a dance from Preciosa? The Pope thinks of abolishing public dances in Spain, and the priests in question have been delegated to examine, personally, the proprieties or improprieties of such exhibitions. With this view, Preciosa is summoned and required to give a specimen of her skill. Now this, in a mere spectacle, would do very well; for here all that is demanded is an occasion or an excuse for a dance; but what business has it in a pure drama? or in what regard does it further the end of a dramatic poem, intended only to be read? In the same manner, the whole of scene the eighth, in the same act, is occupied with six lines of stage directions, as follows: —

"The Theatre. The orchestra plays the Cachucha. Sound of castanets behind the scenes. The curtain rises and discovers PRECIOSA in the attitude of commencing the dance. The Cachucha. Tumult. Hisses. Cries of *Brava!* and *Afuera!* She falters and pauses. The music stops. General confusion. PRECIOSA faints."

But the *inconsequence* of which we complain will be best exemplified by an entire scene. We take scene the fourth, act the first: —

An inn on the road to Alcalá. BALTASAR asleep on a bench. Enter CHISPA.

CHISPA

And here we are, half way to Alcalá, between cocks and midnight. Body o' me! what an inn this is! The lights out and the landlord asleep! Holá! ancient Baltasar!

BALTASAR (*waking*)

Here I am.

CHISPA

Yes, there you are, like a one-eyed Alcalde in a town without inhabitants. Bring a light, and let me have supper.

BALTASAR

Where is your master?

CHISPA

Do not trouble yourself about him. We have stopped a moment to breathe our horses; and if he chooses to walk up and down in the open air, looking into the sky as one who hears it rain, that does not satisfy my hunger, you know. But be quick, for I am in a hurry, and every man stretches his legs according to the length of his coverlet. What have we here?

BALTASAR (*setting a light on the table*)

Stewed rabbit.

CHISPA (*eating*)

Conscience of Portalegre! Stewed kitten, you mean!

BALTASAR

And a pitcher of Pedro Ximenes, with a roasted pear in it.

CHISPA (*drinking*)

Ancient Baltasar, *amigo!* You know how to cry wine and sell vinegar. I tell you this is nothing but *Vino Tinto* of La Mancha, with a tang of the swine-skin.

BALTASAR

I swear to you by Saint Simon and Judas, it is all as I say.

CHISPA

And I swear to you by Saint Peter and Saint Paul, that it is no such thing. Moreover, your supper is like the hidalgo's dinner — very little meat and a great deal of tablecloth.

BALTASAR

Ha! ha! ha!

CHISPA

And more noise than nuts.

BALTASAR

Ha! ha! ha! You must have your joke, Master Chispa. But shall I not ask Don Victorian in, to take a draught of the Pedro Ximenes?

CHISPA

No; you might as well say, "Don't you want some?" to a dead man.

BALTASAR

Why does he go so often to Madrid?

CHISPA

For the same reason that he eats no supper. He is in love. Were you ever in love, Baltasar?

BALTASAR

I was never out of it, good Chispa. It has been the torment of my life.

CHISPA

What! are you on fire, too, old hay-stack? Why, we shall never be able to put you out.

VICTORIAN (*without*)

Chispa!

CHISPA.

Go to bed, Pero Grullo, for the cocks are crowing.

VICTORIAN

Ea! Chispa! Chispa!

CHISPA

Ea! Señor. Come with me, ancient Baltasar, and bring water for the horses. I will pay for the supper to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]

Now here the question occurs — what is accomplished? How has the subject been forwarded? We did not need to learn that Victorian was in love — that was known before; and all that we glean is that a stupid imitation of Sancho Panza drinks, in the course of two minutes (the time occupied in the perusal of the scene), a bottle of *Vino Tinto*, by way of Pedro Ximenes, and devours a stewed kitten in place of a rabbit.

In the beginning of the play this Chispa is the valet of Victorian; subsequently we find him the servant of another; and near the *dénouement* he returns to his original master. No cause is assigned, and not even the shadow of an object is attained; the whole tergiversation being but another instance of the gross inconsequence which abounds in the play.

The author's deficiency of skill is especially evinced in the scene of the *éclaircissement* between Victorian and Preciosa. The former having been enlightened respecting the true character of the latter, by means

of a letter received at Guadarrama, from a friend at Madrid (how wofully inartistical is this!), resolves to go in search of her forthwith, and forthwith, also, discovers her in a wood close at hand. Whereupon he approaches, disguising *his voice:* — yes, we are required to believe that a lover may so disguise his voice from his mistress as even to render his person in full view irrecognizable! He approaches, and each knowing the other, a conversation ensues under the hypothesis that each to the other is unknown — a very unoriginal, and, of course, a very silly source of equivoque, fit only for the gum-elastic imagination of an infant. But what we especially complain of here is that our poet should have taken so many and so obvious pains to bring about this position of equivoque, when it was impossible that it could have served any other purpose than that of injuring his intended effect! Read, for example, this passage: —

VICTORIAN

I never loved a maid;
For she I loved was then a maid no more.

PRECIOSA

How know you that?

VICTORIAN

A little bird in the air
Whispered the secret.

PRECIOSA

There, take back your gold!
Your hand is cold, like a deceiver's hand!
There is no blessing in its charity!
Make her your wife, for you have been abused;
And you shall mend your fortunes, mending hers.

VICTORIAN

How like an angel's speaks the tongue of woman,
When pleading in another's cause her own!

Now here it is clear that if we understood Preciosa to be really ignorant of Victorian's identity, the "pleading in another's cause her own," would create a favorable impression upon the reader, or spectator. But the advice — "Make her your wife," etc., takes an interested and selfish turn when we remember that she knows to whom she speaks.

Again, when Victorian says,

> "That is a pretty ring upon your finger,
> Pray give it me!"

And when she replies,

> "No, never from my hand
> Shall that be taken!"

we are inclined to think her only an artful coquette, knowing, as we do, the extent of her knowledge; on the other hand, we should have applauded her constancy (as the author intended), had she been represented ignorant of Victorian's presence. The effect upon the audience, in a word, would be pleasant in place of disagreeable, were the case altered as we suggest, while the effect upon Victorian would remain altogether untouched.

A still more remarkable instance of deficiency in the dramatic tact is to be found in the mode of bringing about the discovery of Preciosa's parentage. In the very moment of the *éclaircissement* between the lovers, Chispa arrives almost as a matter of course, and settles the point in a sentence: —

> "Good news from Court! Good news! Beltran Cruzado,
> The Count of the Calés, is not your father,
> But your true father has returned to Spain
> Laden with wealth. You are no more a Gypsy."

Now here are three points: — first, the extreme bald-

ness, platitude, and independence of the incident narrated by Chispa. The opportune return of the father (we are tempted to say the excessively opportune) stands by itself, has no relation to any other event in the play, does not appear to arise in the way of *result* from any incident or incidents that have arisen before. It has the air of a happy chance, of a God-send, of an ultra-accident, invented by the playwright by way of compromise for his lack of invention. *Nec Deus intersit*, etc. — but here the god has interposed, and the knot is laughably unworthy of the god.

The second point concerns the return of the father "laden with wealth." The lover has abandoned his mistress in her poverty, and, while yet the words of his proffered reconciliation hang upon his lips, comes his own servant with the news that the mistress' father has returned "laden with wealth." Now, so far as regards the audience, who are behind the scenes and know the fidelity of the lover — so far as regards the audience, all is right; but the poet had no business to place his heroine in the sad predicament of being forced, provided she is not a fool, to suspect both the ignorance and the disinterestedness of the hero.

The third point has reference to the words — "You are now no more a Gypsy." The thesis of this drama, as we have already said, is love disregarding the prejudices of caste, and in the development of this thesis, the powers of the dramatist have been engaged, or should have been engaged, during the whole of the three acts of the play. The interest excited lies in our admiration of the sacrifice, and of the love that could make it; but this interest immediately and disagreeably subsides when we find that the sacrifice has been made to no purpose. "You are no more a Gypsy" dissolves

the charm, and obliterates the whole impression which the author has been at so much labor to convey. Our romantic sense of the hero's chivalry declines into a complacent satisfaction with his fate. We drop our enthusiasm, with the enthusiast, and jovially shake by the hand the mere man of good luck. But is not the latter feeling the more comfortable of the two? Perhaps so; but "comfortable" is not exactly the word Mr. Longfellow might wish applied to the end of his drama, and then why be at the trouble of building up an effect through a hundred and eighty pages, merely to knock it down at the end of the hundred and eighty-first?

We have already given, at some length, our conceptions of the nature of plot; and of that of "The Spanish Student" it seems almost superfluous to speak at all. It has nothing of construction about it. Indeed, there is scarcely a single incident which has any necessary dependence upon any one other. Not only might we take away two-thirds of the whole without ruin, but without detriment — indeed with a positive benefit to the mass. And, even as regards the mere order of arrangement, we might with a very decided chance of improvement put the scenes in a bag, give them a shake or two by way of shuffle, and tumble them out. The whole mode of collocation, not to speak of the feebleness of the incidents in themselves, evinces, on the part of the author, an utter and radical want of the adapting or constructive power which the drama so imperatively demands.

Of the unoriginality of the thesis we have already spoken; and now, to the unoriginality of the events by which the thesis is developed, we need do little more than allude. What, indeed, *could* we say of such incidents as the child stolen by Gypsies, as her edu-

cation as a *danseuse*, as her betrothal to a Gypsy, as her preference for a gentleman, as the rumors against her purity, as her persecution by a *roué*, as the inruption of the *roué* into her chamber, as the consequent misunderstanding between her and her lover, as the duel, as the defeat of the *roué*, as the receipt of his life from the hero, as his boasts of success with the girl, as the *ruse* of the duplicate ring, as the field in consequence abandoned by the lover, as the assassination of Lara while scaling the girl's bed-chamber, as the disconsolate peregrination of Victorian, as the equivoque scene with Preciosa, as the offering to purchase the ring and the refusal to part with it, as the "news from court" telling of the Gypsy's true parentage, — what *could* we say of all these ridiculous things, except that we have met them, each and all, some two or three hundred times before, and that they have formed, in a greater or less degree, the staple material of every Hop-O'My-Thumb tragedy since the flood? There is not an incident, from the first page of "The Spanish Student" to the last and most satisfactory, which we would not undertake to find bodily, at ten minutes' notice, in some one of the thousand and one comedies of intrigue attributed to Calderon and Lope de Vega.

But if our poet is grossly unoriginal in his subject, and in the events which evolve it, may he not be original in his handling or tone? We really grieve to say that he is not, unless, indeed, we grant him the meed of originality for the peculiar manner in which he has jumbled together the quaint and stilted tone of the old English dramatists with the *dégagée* air of Cervantes. But this is a point upon which, through want of space, we must necessarily permit the reader

to judge altogether for himself. We quote, however, a passage from the second scene of the first act, by way of showing how very easy a matter it is to make a man discourse Sancho Panza: —

CHISPA

Abernuncio Satanas! and a plague on all lovers who ramble about at night, drinking the elements, instead of sleeping quietly in their beds. Every dead man to his cemetery, say I; and every friar to his monastery. Now, here 's my master, Victorian, yesterday a cow-keeper, and to-day a gentleman; yesterday a student, and to-day a lover; and I must be up later than the nightingale, for as the abbot sings so must the sacristan respond. God grant he may soon be married, for then shall all this serenading cease. Ay, marry! marry! marry! Mother, what does marry mean? It means to spin, to bear children, and to weep, my daughter! And, of a truth, there is something more in matrimony than the wedding-ring. And now, gentlemen, *Pax vobiscum*, as the ass said to the cabbages!

And, we might add, as an ass *only* should say.

In fact, throughout "The Spanish Student," as well as throughout other compositions of its author, there runs a very obvious vein of imitation. We are perpetually reminded of something we have seen before — some old acquaintance in manner or matter; and even where the similarity cannot be said to amount to plagiarism, it is still injurious to the poet in the good opinion of him who reads.

Among the minor defects of the play, we may mention the frequent allusion to book incidents not generally known, and requiring each a note by way of explanation. The drama demands that everything be so instantaneously evident that he who runs may read; and the only impression effected by these notes to a

play is, that the author is desirous of showing his reading.

We may mention, also, occasional tautologies — such as: —

> "Never did I behold thee so *attired*
> And *garmented* in beauty as to-night!

Or,

> "What we need
> Is the celestial fire to change the flint
> Into *transparent* crystal, *bright and clear!*"

We may speak, too, of more than occasional errors of grammar. For example, p. 23: —

> "Did no one see thee? None, my love, but *thou*."

Here "but" is not a conjunction, but a preposition, and governs *thee* in the objective. "None but *thee*" would be right; meaning none *except* thee, *saving* thee. At page 27, "mayst" is somewhat incorrectly written "may'st." At page 34 we have: —

> "I have no other saint than *thou* to pray to."

Here authority and analogy are both against Mr. Longfellow. "Than" also is here a preposition governing the objective, and meaning *save*, or *except*. "I have none other God than thee," etc. See Horne Tooke. The Latin "*quam te*" is exactly equivalent. At page 80 we read: —

> "*Like thee* I am a captive, and *like thee*,
> I have a gentle jailer."

Here "like thee" (although grammatical of course) does not convey the idea. Mr. Longfellow does not mean that the speaker is *like* the bird itself, but that his *condition* resembles it. The true reading would thus be: —

> "*As thou* I am a captive, and, *as thou*
> I have a gentle jailer:"

That is to say, *as thou art*, and *as thou hast*.

Upon the whole, we regret that Professor Longfellow has written this work, and feel expecially vexed that he has committed himself by its republication. Only when regarded as a mere poem can it be said to have merit of any kind. For, in fact, it is only when we separate the poem from the drama that the passages we have commended as beautiful can be understood to have beauty. We are not too sure, indeed, that a "dramatic poem" is not a flat contradiction in terms. At all events a man of true genius (and such Mr. Longfellow unquestionably is) has no business with these hybrid and paradoxical compositions. Let a poem be a poem only; let a play be a play and nothing more. As for "The Spanish Student," its thesis is unoriginal; its incidents are antique; its plot is no plot; its characters have no character; in short, it is little better than a play upon words to style it "A Play" at all.

LOWELL'S "A FABLE FOR CRITICS"

WHAT have we Americans accomplished in the way of satire? "The Vision of Rubeta," by Laughton Osborn, is probably our best composition of the kind: but, in saying this, we intend no excessive commendation. Trumbull's clumsy and imitative work is scarcely worth mention; and then we have Halleck's "Croakers," local and ephemeral; but what is there besides? Park Benjamin has written a clever address, with the title "Infatuation," and Holmes has an occasional scrap, piquant enough in its way; but we can think of nothing more that can be fairly called "satire." Some matters we have produced, to be sure, which were excellent in the way of burlesque — the "Poems" of William Ellery Channing, for example — without meaning a syllable that was not utterly solemn and serious. Odes, ballads, songs, sonnets, epics, and epigrams, possessed of this unintentional excellence, we should have no difficulty in designating by the dozen; but in the particular of direct and obvious satire, it cannot be denied that we are unaccountably deficient.

It has been suggested that this deficiency arises from the want of a suitable field for satirical display. In England, it is said, satire abounds, because the people there find a proper target in the aristocracy,

whom they (the people) regard as a distinct race with whom they have little in common; relishing even the most virulent abuse of the upper classes with a gusto undiminished by any feeling that they (the people) have any concern in it. In Russia, or Austria, on the other hand, it is urged, satire is unknown; because there is danger in touching the aristocracy, and self-satire would be odious to the mass. In America, also, the people who write are, it is maintained, the people who read; thus in satirizing the people we satirize only ourselves, and are never in condition to sympathize with the satire.

All this is more verisimilar than true. It is forgotten that no individual considers himself as one of the mass. Each person, in his own estimate, is the pivot on which all the rest of the world spins round. We may abuse *the people* by wholesale, and yet with a clear conscience, so far as regards any compunction for offending any one from among the multitude of which that "people" is composed. Every one of the crowd will cry "*Encore!* — give it to them, the vagabonds! — it serves them right." It seems to us that, in America, we have refused to encourage satire — not because what we have had touches us too nearly — but because it has been too pointless to touch us at all. Its namby-pambyism has arisen, in part, from the general want, among our men of letters, of that minute polish, of that skill in details, which, in combination with natural sarcastic power, satire, more than any other form of literature, so imperatively demands. In part, also, we may attribute our failure to the colonial sin of imitation. We content ourselves, at this point, not less supinely than at all others, with doing what not only has been done before, but

what, however well done, has yet been done *ad nauseam*. We should not be able to endure infinite repetitions of even absolute excellence; but what is "McFingal" more than a faint echo from "Hudibras"? — and what is "The Vision of Rubeta" more than a vast gilded swill-trough overflowing with "Dunciad" and water? Although we are not all Archilochuses, however — although we have few pretensions to the ἠχεῆντες ἰάμβοι — although, in short, we are no satirists ourselves, there can be no question that we answer sufficiently well as subjects for satire.

"The Vision" is bold enough, if we leave out of sight its anonymous issue, and bitter enough, and witty enough, if we forget its pitiable punning on names, and long enough (Heaven knows), and well constructed and decently versified; but it fails in the principal element of all satire — sarcasm — because the intention to be sarcastic (as in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and in all the more classical satires) is permitted to render itself manifest. The malevolence appears. The author is never very severe, because he is at no time particularly cool. We laugh not so much at his victims as at himself, for letting them put him in such a passion. And where a deeper sentiment than mirth is excited — where it is pity or contempt that we are made to feel — the feeling is too often reflected, in its object, from the satirized to the satirist, with whom we sympathize in the discomfort of his animosity. Mr. Osborn has not many superiors in downright invective; but this is the awkward left arm of the satiric Muse. That satire alone is worth talking about which at least appears to be the genial, good-humored outpouring of irrepressible merriment.

The "Fable for Critics," just issued, has not the name of its author on the titlepage; and but for some slight foreknowledge of the literary opinions, likes, dislikes, whims, prejudices, and crotchets of Mr. James Russell Lowell, we should have had much difficulty in attributing so very loose a brochure to him. The "Fable" is essentially "loose" — ill-conceived and feebly executed, as well in detail as in general. Some good hints and some sparkling witticisms do not serve to compensate us for its rambling plot (if plot it can be called) and for the want of artistic finish so particularly noticeable throughout the work — especially in its versification. In Mr. Lowell's prose efforts we have before observed a certain *disjointedness*, but never, until now, in his verse; and we confess some surprise at his putting forth so unpolished a performance. The author of "The Legend of Brittany" (which is decidedly the noblest poem, of the same length, written by an American) could not do a better thing than to take the advice of those who mean him well, in spite of his fanaticism, and leave prose, with satiric verse, to those who are better able to manage them; while he contents himself with that class of poetry for which, and for which alone, he seems to have an especial vocation — the poetry of *sentiment*. This, to be sure, is not the very loftiest order of verse, for it is far inferior to either that of the imagination or that of the passions; but it is the loftiest region in which Mr. Lowell can get his breath without difficulty.

Our primary objection to this "Fable for Critics" has reference to a point which we have already touched in a general way. "The malevolence appears." We laugh not so much at the author's

victims as at himself, for letting them put him in such a passion. The very title of the book shows the want of a due sense in respect to the satirical essence, *sarcasm*. This "Fable" — this severe lesson — is meant "*for Critics*." "Ah!" we say to ourselves at once — "we see how it is. Mr. Lowell is a poor-devil poet, and some critic has been reviewing him, and making him feel very uncomfortable; whereupon, bearing in mind that Lord Byron, when similarly assailed, avenged his wrongs in a satire which he called 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' he (Mr. Lowell) imitative as usual, has been endeavoring to get redress in a parallel manner — by a satire with a parallel title — 'A Fable for Critics.'"

All this the reader says to himself; and all this tells against Mr. Lowell in two ways — first, by suggesting unlucky comparisons between Byron and Lowell, and, secondly, by reminding us of the various criticisms in which we have been amused (rather ill-naturedly) at seeing Mr. Lowell "used up."

The title starts us on this train of thought, and the satire sustains us in it. Every reader versed in our literary gossip is at once put *dessous des cartes* as to the particular provocation which engendered the "Fable." Miss Margaret Fuller, some time ago, in a silly and conceited piece of Transcendentalism, which she called an "Essay on American Literature," or something of that kind, had the consummate pleasantry, after selecting, from the list of American poets, Cornelius Mathews and William Ellery Channing for especial commendation, to speak of Longfellow as a booby, and of Lowell as so wretched a poetaster "as to be disgusting even to his best friends." All this Miss Fuller said, if not in our precise words, still in

words quite as much to the purpose. Why she said it, Heaven only knows — unless it was because she was Margaret Fuller, and wished to be taken for nobody else. Messrs. Longfellow and Lowell, so pointedly picked out for abuse as the worst of our poets, are, upon the whole, perhaps, our best — although Bryant, and one or two others, are scarcely inferior. As for the two favorites, selected just as pointedly for laudation by Miss Fuller — it is really difficult to think of them, in connection with poetry, without laughing. Mr. Mathews once wrote some sonnets "On Man," and Mr. Channing some lines on "A Tin Can," or something of that kind; and if the former gentleman be not the very worst poet that ever existed on the face of the earth, it is only because he is not quite so bad as the latter. To speak algebraically: — Mr. Mathews is *ex*ecrable, but Mr. Channing is $x + 1$-ecrable.

Mr. Lowell has obviously aimed his "Fable" at Miss Fuller's head, in the first instance, with an eye to its ricocheting so as to knock down Mr. Mathews in the second. Miss Fuller is first introduced as "Miss ——," rhyming to "cooler," and afterwards as "Miranda;" while poor Mr. Mathews is brought in upon all occasions, head and shoulders; and now and then a sharp thing, although never very original, is said of them or at them; but all the true satiric effect wrought is that produced by the satirist against himself. The reader is all the time smiling to think that so unsurpassable a — (what shall we call her? — we wish to be civil) — a transcendentalist as Miss Fuller should, by such a criticism, have had the power to put a respectable poet in such a passion.

As for the plot or conduct of this "Fable," the less

we say of it the better. It is so weak, so flimsy, so ill put together, as to be not worth the trouble of understanding: — something, as usual, about Apollo and Daphne. Is there no originality on the face of the earth? Mr. Lowell's total want of it is shown at all points — very especially in his preface of rhyming verse written without distinction by lines or initial capitals (a hackneyed matter, originating, we believe, with "Fraser's Magazine"), very especially also, in his long continuations of some particular rhyme — a fashion introduced, if we remember aright, by Leigh Hunt, more than twenty-five years ago, in his "Feast of the Poets," which, by the way, has been Mr. Lowell's model in many respects.

Although ill-temper has evidently engendered this "Fable," it is by no means a satire throughout. Much of it is devoted to panegyric; but our readers would be quite puzzled to know the grounds of the author's laudations, in many cases, unless made acquainted with a fact which we think it as well they should be informed of at once. Mr. Lowell is one of the most rabid of the Abolition fanatics; and no Southerner, who does not wish to be insulted, and at the same time revolted by a bigotry the most obstinately blind and deaf, should ever touch a volume by this author.[1] His fanaticism about slavery is a mere local outbreak of the same innate wrong-headedness which, if he owned slaves, would manifest itself

[1] This "Fable *for Critics*" — this *literary* satire — this benevolent *jeu d'esprit*, is disgraced by such passages as the following: —

> "Forty fathers of Freedom, of whom twenty bred
> Their sons for the rice swamps, at so much a head,
> And their daughters for — faugh!"

in atrocious ill-treatment of them, with murder of any abolitionist who should endeavor to set them free. A fanatic of Mr. Lowell's species is simply a fanatic for the sake of fanaticism, and must be a fanatic in whatever circumstances you place him.

His prejudices on the topic of slavery break out everywhere in his present book. Mr. Lowell has not the common honesty to speak well, even in a literary sense, of any man who is not a ranting abolitionist. With the exception of Mr. Poe (who has written some commendatory criticisms on his poems), no Southerner is mentioned at all in this "Fable." It is a fashion among Mr. Lowell's set to affect a belief that there is no such thing as Southern literature. Northerners, people who have really nothing to speak of as men of letters, are cited by the dozen, and lauded by this candid critic without stint, while Legaré, Simms, Longstreet, and others of equal note, are passed by in contemptuous silence. Mr. Lowell cannot carry his frail honesty of opinion even so far South as New York. All whom he praises are Bostonians. Other writers are barbarians, and satirized accordingly, if mentioned at all.

To show the general manner of the Fable, we quote a portion of what he says about Mr. Poe: —

> "There comes Poe with his Raven, like Barnaby Rudge,
> Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge,
> Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,
> In a way to make all men of common-sense damn metres,
> Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,
> But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind."

We may observe here that profound ignorance on any particular topic is always sure to manifest itself by some allusion to "common-sense" as an all-sufficient

instructor. So far from Mr. Poe's talking "like a book" on the topic at issue, his chief purpose has been to demonstrate that there exists no book on the subject worth talking about; and "common-sense," after all, has been the basis on which he relied, in contradistinction from the uncommon nonsense of Mr. Lowell and the small pedants.

And now let us see how far the unusual "common-sense" of our satirist has availed him in the structure of his verse. First, by way of showing what his intention was, we quote three accidentally accurate lines: —

> But a boy | he could ne | ver be right | ly defined.
> As I said | he was ne | ver precise | ly unkind.
> But as Ci | cero says | he won't say | this or that.

Here it is clearly seen that Mr. Lowell intends a line of four anapæsts. (An anapæst is a foot composed of two short syllables followed by a long.) With this observation, we will now simply copy a few of the lines which constitute the body of the poem; asking any of our readers to *read them if they can;* that is to say, we place the question, without argument, on the broad basis of the very commonest "common-sense."

"They 're all from one source, monthly, weekly, diurnal."

"Disperse all one's good and condense all one's poor traits."

"The one 's two-thirds Norseman, the other half Greek."

"He has imitators in scores who omit."

"Should suck milk, strong-will-giving brave, such as runs."

"Along the far railroad the steam-snake glide white."

"From the same runic type-fount and alphabet."

"Earth has six truest patriots: four discoverers of ether."

"Every cockboat that swims clear its fierce (pop) gundeck at him."

"Is some of it pr—— No, 't is not even prose."

"O'er his principles, when something else turns up trumps."

"But a few silly-(syllo- I mean) gisms that squat 'em."

"*Nos*, we don't want *extra* freezing in winter."

"Plough, sail, forge, build, carve, paint, make all over new."

But enough: — we have given a fair specimen of the general versification. It might have been better — but we are quite sure that it *could not have been worse*. So much for "common-sense," in Mr. Lowell's understanding of the term. Mr. Lowell should not have meddled with the anapæstic rhythm: it is exceedingly awkward in the hands of one who knows nothing about it and who *will* persist in fancying that he can write it by ear. Very especially, he should have avoided this rhythm in satire, which, more than any other branch of Letters, is dependent upon seeming trifles for its effect. Two-thirds of the force of the "Dunciad" may be referred to its exquisite finish; and had the "Fable for Critics" been (what it is *not*) the quintessence of the satiric spirit itself, it would nevertheless, in so slovenly a form, have failed. As it is, no failure was ever more complete or more pitiable. By the publication of a book at once so ambitious and so feeble, so malevolent in design and so harmless in execution, a work so roughly and clumsily yet so weakly constructed, so very different in body and spirit from anything that he has written before, Mr. Lowell has committed an irrevocable *faux pas* and lowered himself at least fifty per cent in the literary public opinion.

MOORE'S "ALCIPHRON"

WITH SOME REMARKS ON JAMES RODMAN DRAKE

AMID the vague mythology of Egypt, the voluptuous scenery of her Nile, and the gigantic mysteries of her pyramids, Anacreon Moore has found all of that striking *materiel* which he so much delights in working up, and which he has embodied in the poem before us. The design of the story (for plot it has none) has been a less consideration than its facilities, and is made subservient to its execution. The subject is comprised in five epistles. In the first, Alciphron, the head of the Epicurean sect at Athens, writes, from Alexandria, to his friend Cleon, in the former city. He tells him (assigning a reason for quitting Athens and her pleasures) that, having fallen asleep one night after protracted festivity, he beholds, in a dream, a spectre, who tells him that, beside the sacred Nile, he, the Epicurean, shall find that Eternal Life for which he had so long been sighing. In the second, from the same to the same, the traveller speaks, at large and in rapturous terms, of the scenery of Egypt; of the beauty of her maidens; of an approaching Festival of the Moon; and of a wild hope entertained that amid the subterranean chambers of some huge pyramid lies the secret which he covets,

the secret of Life Eternal. In the third letter, he relates a love adventure at the Festival. Fascinated by the charms of one of the nymphs of a procession, he is first in despair at losing sight of her, then overjoyed at again seeing her in Necropolis, and finally traces her steps until they are lost near one of the smaller pyramids. In epistle the fourth (still from the same to the same), he enters and explores the pyramid, and, passing through a complete series of Eleusinian mysteries, is at length successfully initiated into the secrets of Memphian priestcraft; we learning this latter point from letter the fifth, which concludes the poem and is addressed by Orcus, high priest of Memphis, to Decius, a prætorian prefect.

A new poem from Moore calls to mind that critical opinion respecting him which had its origin, we believe, in the dogmatism of Coleridge — we mean the opinion that he is essentially the poet of *fancy* — the term being employed in contradistinction to *imagination*. "The Fancy," says the author of the "Ancient Mariner," in his "Biographia Literaria," "the fancy combines, the imagination creates." And this was intended, and has been received, as a distinction. If so at all, it is one without a difference; without even a difference of *degree*. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination; and neither creates in any respect. All novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can *imagine* nothing which has not really existed; and this point is susceptible of the most positive demonstration — see the Baron de Bielfeld, in his *Premiers Traits de l'Érudition Universelle*, 1767. It will be said, perhaps, that we can imagine a griffin, and that a griffin does not exist. Not the griffin certainly, but its component parts. It

is a mere compendium of known limbs and features, of known qualities. Thus with all which seems to be *new* — which appears to be a *creation* of intellect. It is re-soluble into the old. The wildest and most vigorous effort of mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

We might make a distinction, of degree, between the fancy and the imagination, in saying that the latter is the former loftily employed. But experience proves this distinction to be unsatisfactory. What we feel and know to be fancy, will be found still only fanciful, whatever be the theme which engages it. It retains its idiosyncrasy under all circumstances. No subject exalts it into the ideal. We might exemplify this by reference to the writings of one whom our patriotism, rather than our judgment, has elevated to a niche in the Poetic Temple which he does not becomingly fill, and which he cannot long uninterruptedly hold. We allude to the late Dr. Rodman Drake, whose puerile abortion, "The Culprit Fay," we examined, at some length, in a critique elsewhere; proving it, we think, beyond all question, to belong to that class of the pseudo-ideal, in dealing with which we find ourselves embarrassed between a kind of half-consciousness that we ought to admire, and the certainty that we do not. Dr. Drake was employed upon a good subject — at least it is a subject precisely identical with those which Shakspeare was wont so happily to treat, and in which, especially, the author of "Lilian" has so wonderfully succeeded. But the American has brought to his task a mere fancy, and has grossly failed in doing what many suppose him to have done — in writing an ideal or imaginative poem. There is not one particle of the true ποιῆσις about

"The Culprit Fay." We say that the subject, even at its best points, did not aid Dr. Drake in the slightest degree. He was never more than fanciful. The passage, for example, chiefly cited by his admirers, is the account of the "Sylphid Queen;" and to show the difference between the false and true ideal, we collated, in the review just alluded to, this, the most admired passage, with one upon a similar topic by Shelley. We shall be pardoned for repeating here, as nearly as we remember them, some words of what we then said.

The description of the Sylphid Queen runs thus:

"But oh, how fair the shape that lay
Beneath a rainbow bending bright;
She seemed to the entranced Fay
The loveliest of the forms of light;
Her mantle was the purple rolled
At twilight in the west afar;
'T was tied with threads of dawning gold,
And buttoned with a sparkling star.
Her face was like the lily roon
That veils the vestal planet's hue;
Her eyes two beamlets from the moon
Set floating in the welkin blue.
Her hair is like the sunny beam,
And the diamond gems which round it gleam
Are the pure drops of dewy even
That ne'er have left their native heaven."

In the "Queen Mab" of Shelley, a Fairy is thus introduced, —

"Those, who had looked upon the sight
Passing all human glory,
Saw not the yellow moon,
Saw not the mortal scene,
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
Heard not an earthly sound,

Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That filled the lonely dwelling."

And thus described : —

"The Fairy's frame was slight — yon fibrous cloud
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,
Yet with an undulating motion,
Swayed to her outline gracefully."

In these exquisite lines the faculty of mere comparison is but little exercised — that of ideality in a wonderful degree. It is probable that in a similar case Dr. Drake would have formed the face of the fairy of the "fibrous cloud," her arms of the "pale tinge of even," her eyes of the "fair stars," and her body of the "twilight shadow." Having so done, his admirers would have congratulated him upon his *imagination*, not taking the trouble to think that they themselves could at any moment *imagine* a fairy of materials equally as good, and conveying an equally distinct idea. Their mistake would be precisely analogous to that of many a schoolboy who admires the imagination displayed in "Jack the Giant-Killer," and is finally rejoiced at discovering his own imagination to surpass that of the author, since the monsters destroyed by Jack are only about forty feet in height, and he himself has no trouble in imagining some of one hundred and forty. It will be seen that the fairy

of Shelley is not a mere compound of incongruous natural objects, inartificially put together, and unaccompanied by any moral sentiment; but a being, in the illustration of whose nature some physical elements are used collaterally as adjuncts, while the main conception springs immediately, *or thus apparently springs*, from the brain of the poet, enveloped in the moral sentiments of grace, of color, of motion — of the beautiful, of the *mystical*, of the august — in short, of the ideal.

The truth is, that the just distinction between the fancy and the imagination (and which is still but a distinction of degree) is involved in the consideration of the mystic. We give this as an idea of our own altogether. We have no authority for our opinion, but do not the less firmly hold it. The term "mystic" is here employed in the sense of Augustus William Schlegel, and of most other German critics. It is applied by them to that class of composition in which there lies beneath the transparent upper current of meaning, an under or *suggestive* one. What we vaguely term the *moral* of any sentiment is its mystic or secondary expression. It has the vast force of an accompaniment in music. This vivifies the air; that spiritualizes the fanciful conception, and lifts it into the ideal.

This theory will bear, we think, the most rigorous tests which can be made applicable to it, and will be acknowledged as tenable by all who are themselves imaginative. If we carefully examine those poems, or portions of poems, or those prose romances, which mankind have been accustomed to designate as "imaginative" (for an instinctive feeling leads us to employ properly the term whose full import we have

still never been able to define), it will be seen that all so designated are remarkable for the suggestive character which we have discussed. They are strongly mystic, in the proper sense of the word. We will here only call to the reader's mind, the "Prometheus Vinctus" of Æschylus; the "Inferno" of Dante; the "Destruction of Numantia" by Cervantes; the "Comus" of Milton; the "Ancient Mariner," the "Christabel," and the "Kubla Khan," of Coleridge; the "Nightingale" of Keats; and, most especially, the "Sensitive Plant" of Shelley, and the "Undine" of De La Motte Fouqué. These two latter poems (for we call them both such) are the finest possible examples of the purely ideal. There is little of fancy here, and everything of imagination. With each note of the lyre is heard a ghostly, and, not always a distinct, but an august and soul-exalting *echo*. In every glimpse of beauty presented, we catch, through long and wild vistas, dim bewildering visions of a far more ethereal beauty beyond. But not so in poems which the world has always persisted in terming fanciful. Here the upper current is often exceedingly brilliant and beautiful; but then men feel that this upper current is all. No Naiad voice addresses them from below. The notes of the air of the song do not tremble with the according tones of the accompaniment.

It is the failure to perceive these truths which has occasioned the embarrassment experienced by our critics while discussing the topic of Moore's station in the poetic world — that hesitation with which we are obliged to refuse him the loftiest rank among the most noble. The popular voice, and the popular heart, have denied him that happiest quality, imagination; and here the popular voice

(because for once it has gone with the popular heart) is right, but yet only relatively so. Imagination is not the leading feature of the poetry of Moore; but he possesses it in no little degree.

We will quote a few instances from the poem now before us — instances which will serve to exemplify the distinctive feature which we have attributed to ideality.

It is the *suggestive* force which exalts and ethereal-izes the passages we copy: —

> "Or is it that there lurks, indeed,
> Some truth in man's prevailing creed,
> And that our guardians from on high
> Come, in that pause from toil and sin,
> To put the senses' curtain by,
> And on the wakeful soul look in!"

Again: —

> "The eternal pyramids of Memphis burst
> Awfully on my sight — standing sublime
> 'Twixt earth and heaven, the watch-towers of Time,
> From whose lone summit, when his reign hath past
> From earth forever, he will look his last."

And again: —

> "Is there for man no hope — but this which dooms
> His only lasting trophies to be tombs!
> But 't is not so — earth, heaven, all nature shows
> He *may* become immortal, *may* unclose
> The wings within him wrapt, and proudly rise
> Redeemed from earth, a creature of the skies!"

And here: —

> "[The pyramid] shadows, stretching from the light,
> Look like the first colossal steps of Night,
> Stalking across the valley to invade
> The distant hills of porphyry with their shade!"

And once more : —

> " There Silence, thoughtful god, who loves
> The neighborhood of Death, in groves
> Of asphodel lies hid, and weaves
> His hushing spell among the leaves."

Such lines as these, we must admit, however, are not of frequent occurrence in the poem — the sum of whose great beauty is composed of the several sums of a world of minor excellences.

Moore has always been renowned for the number and appositeness, as well as novelty, of his similes; and the renown thus acquired is strongly indicial of his deficiency in that nobler merit — the noblest of them all. No poet thus distinguished was ever richly ideal. Pope and Cowper are remarkable instances in point. Similes (so much insisted upon by the critics of the reign of Queen Anne) are never, in our opinion, strictly in good taste, whatever may be said to the contrary, and certainly can never be made to accord with other high qualities, except when naturally arising from the subject in the way of illustration — and, when thus arising, they have seldom the merit of novelty. To be novel, they must fail in essential particulars. The higher minds will avoid their frequent use. They form no portion of the ideal, and appertain to the fancy alone.

We proceed with a few random observations upon " Alciphron." The poem is distinguished throughout by a very happy facility which has never been mentioned in connection with its author, but which has much to do with the reputation he has obtained. We allude to the facility with which he recounts a poetical story in a prosaic way. By this is meant that he preserves the tone and method of arrangement of a

prose relation, and thus obtains great advantages over his more stilted compeers. His is no poetical *style* (such, for example, as the French have — a distinct style for a distinct purpose), but an easy and ordinary prose manner *ornamented into poetry*. By means of this he is enabled to enter, with ease, into details which would baffle any other versifier of the age, and at which Lamartine would stand aghast. For anything that we see to the contrary, Moore might solve a cubic equation in verse. His facility in this respect is truly admirable, and is, no doubt, the result of long practice after mature deliberation. We refer the reader to page 50, of the pamphlet now reviewed; where the minute and conflicting incidents of the descent into the pyramid are detailed with absolutely more precision than we have ever known a similar relation detailed with in prose.

In general dexterity and melody of versification the author of "Lalla Rookh" is unrivalled; but he is by no means at all times accurate, falling occasionally into the common foible of throwing accent upon syllables too unimportant to sustain it. Thus, in the lines which follow, where we have italicised the weak syllables: —

"And mark, 't is nigh; already *the* sun bids."

"While, hark! from all the temples *a* rich swell."

"I rushed in*to* the cool night air."

He also too frequently draws out the word "Heaven" into two syllables — a protraction which it *never* will support.

His English is now and then objectionable, as, at page 26, where he speaks of

"lighted barks
That down Syene's cataract *shoots*,"

making *shoots* rhyme with flutes, below; also, at page 6, and elsewhere, where the word *none* has improperly a singular, instead of a plural force. But such criticism as this is somewhat captious, for in general he is most highly polished.

At page 27, he has stolen his "woven snow" from the *ventum textilem* of Apuleius.

At page 8, he either himself has misunderstood the tenets of Epicurus, or wilfully misrepresents them through the voice of Alciphron. We incline to the former idea, however, as the philosophy of that most noble of the sophists is habitually perverted by the moderns. Nothing could be more spiritual and less sensual than the doctrines we so torture into wrong. But we have drawn out this notice at somewhat too great length, and must conclude. In truth, the exceeding beauty of "Alciphron" has bewildered and detained us. We could not point out a poem in any language which, as a whole, greatly excels it. It is far superior to "Lalla Rookh." While Moore does not reach, except in rare snatches, the height of the loftiest qualities of some whom we have named, yet he has written finer poems than any, of equal length, by the greatest of his rivals. His radiance, not always as bright as some flashes from other pens, is yet a radiance of equable glow, whose total amount of light exceeds by very much, we think, that total amount in the case of any cotemporary writer whatsoever. A vivid fancy, an epigrammatic spirit, a fine taste, vivacity, dexterity, and a musical ear have made him very easily what he is, the most popular poet now living, if not the most popular that ever lived; and, perhaps, a slight modification at birth of that which

phrenologists have agreed to term *temperament*, might have made him the truest and noblest votary of the Muse of any age or clime. As it is, we have only casual glimpses of that *mens divinior* which is assuredly enshrined within him.

HORNE'S "ORION"

MR. R. H. HORNE, the author of the "Orion," has, of late years, acquired a high and extensive *home* reputation, although, as yet, he is only partially known in America. He will be remembered, however, as the author of a very well-written introduction to Black's translation of Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," and as a contributor with Wordsworth, Hunt, Miss Barrett, and others, to "Chaucer Modernized." He is the author, also, of "Cosmo de' Medici," of "The Death of Marlowe," and, especially, of "Gregory the Seventh," a fine tragedy, prefaced with an "Essay on Tragic Influence." "Orion" was originally advertised to be sold for *a farthing;* and, at this price, three large editions were actually sold. The fourth edition (a specimen of which now lies before us) was issued at a shilling, and also *sold.* A fifth is promised at half a crown; this likewise, with even a sixth at a crown, may be disposed of, partly through the intrinsic merit of the work itself, but chiefly through the ingenious novelty of the original price.

We have been among the earliest readers of Mr. Horne, among the most earnest admirers of his high genius; for a man of high, of the highest genius, he unquestionably is. With an eager wish to do justice to

his "Gregory the Seventh," we have never yet found exactly that opportunity we desired. Meantime, we looked, with curiosity, for what the British critics would say of a work which, in the boldness of its conception, and in the fresh originality of its management, would necessarily fall beyond the routine of their customary verbiage. We saw nothing, however, that either could or should be understood — nothing, certainly, that was worth understanding. The tragedy itself was, unhappily, not devoid of the ruling cant of the day, and its critics (that cant incarnate) took their cue from some of its infected passages, and proceeded forthwith to rhapsody and æsthetics, by way of giving a common-sense public an intelligible idea of the book. By the "cant of the day" we mean the disgusting practice of putting on the airs of an owl, and endeavoring to look miraculously wise; the affectation of second sight, of a species of ecstatic prescience, of an intensely bathetic penetration into all sorts of mysteries, psychological ones in especial; an Orphic, an ostrich affectation, which buries its head in balderdash, and, seeing nothing itself, fancies, therefore, that its preposterous carcass is not a visible object of derision for the world at large.

Of "Orion" itself, we have, as yet, seen few notices in the British periodicals, and these few are merely repetitions of the old jargon. All that has been said, for example, might be summed up in some such paragraph as this: —

"'Orion' is the *earnest* outpouring of the oneness of the psychological MAN. It has the individuality of the true SINGLENESS. It is not to be regarded as a Poem, but as a WORK — as a multiple THEOGONY — as a manifestation of the WORKS and the DAYS.

It is a pinion in the PROGRESS — a wheel in the MOVEMENT that moveth ever and goeth alway — a mirror of SELF-INSPECTION, held up by the SEER of the Age essential — of the Age *in esse* — for the SEERS of the Ages possible — *in posse*. We hail a brother in the work."

Of the mere opinions of the donkeys who bray thus — of their mere dogmas and doctrines, literary, æsthetical, or what not — we know little, and, upon our honor, we wish to know less. Occupied, Laputacally, in their great work of a progress that never progresses, we take it for granted, also, that they care as little about ours. But whatever the opinions of these people may be, however portentous the "IDEA" which they have been so long threatening to "evolve," we still think it clear that they take a very roundabout way of evolving it. The use of language is in the promulgation of thought. If a man, if an Orphicist, or a SEER, or whatever else he may choose to call himself, while the rest of the world calls him an ass, — if this gentleman have an idea which he does not understand himself, the best thing he can do is to say nothing about it; for, of course, he can entertain no hope that what he, the SEER, cannot comprehend, should be comprehended by the mass of common humanity; but if he have an idea which is actually intelligible to himself, and if he sincerely wish to render it intelligible to others, we then hold it as indisputable that he should employ those forms of speech which are the best adapted to further his object. He should speak to the people in that people's ordinary tongue. He should arrange words — such as are habitually employed for the several preliminary and introductory ideas to be conveyed — he should arrange them in

collocations such as those in which we are accustomed to see those words arranged.

But to all this the Orphicist thus replies: "I am a SEER. My IDEA — the idea which by Providence I am especially commissioned to evolve — is one so vast — so novel — that ordinary words, in ordinary collocations, will be insufficient for its comfortable evolution." Very true. We grant the vastness of the IDEA — it is manifested in the sucking of the thumb; but, then, if *ordinary* language be insufficient — ordinary language which men understand — *a fortiori* will be insufficient that inordinate language which no man has *ever* understood and which any well-educated baboon would blush in being accused of understanding. The SEER, therefore, has no resource but to oblige mankind by holding his tongue, and suffering his IDEA to remain quietly "unevolved," until some Mesmeric mode of intercommunication shall be invented, whereby the antipodal brains of the SEER and of the man of Common-Sense shall be brought into the necessary *rapport*. Meantime we earnestly ask if *bread-and-butter* be the vast IDEA in question, if *bread-and-butter* be any portion of this vast IDEA; for we have often observed that when a SEER has to speak of even so usual a thing as bread-and-butter, he can never be induced to mention it outright. He will, if you choose, say anything and everything *but* bread-and-butter. He will consent to hint at buckwheat cake. He may even accommodate you so far as to insinuate oatmeal porridge; but, if bread-and-butter be really the matter intended, we never yet met the Orphicist who could get out the three individual words "bread-and-butter."

We have already said that "Gregory the Seventh"

was unhappily infected with the customary cant of the day, the cant of the muddle-pates who dishonor a profound and ennobling philosophy by styling themselves transcendentalists. In fact, there are few highly sensitive or imaginative intellects for which the vortex of *mysticism*, in any shape, has not an almost irresistible influence, on account of the shadowy confines which separate the Unknown from the Sublime. Mr. Horne, then, is, in some measure, infected. The success of his previous works has led him to attempt, zealously, the production of a poem which should be worthy his high powers. We have no doubt that he revolved carefully in mind a variety of august conceptions, and from these thoughtfully selected what his judgment, rather than what his impulses, designated as the noblest and the best. In a word, he has weakly yielded his own poetic sentiment of the poetic — yielded it, in some degree, to the pertinacious opinion, and *talk*, of a certain junto by which he is surrounded — a junto of dreamers whose absolute intellect may, perhaps, compare with his own very much after the fashion of an ant-hill with the Andes. By this talk — by its continuity rather than by any other quality it possessed — he has been badgered into the attempt at commingling the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and of Truth. He has been so far blinded as to permit himself to imagine that a maudlin philosophy (granting it to be worth enforcing) could be enforced by poetic imagery, and illustrated by the jingling of rhythm; or, more unpardonably, he has been induced to believe that a poem, whose single object is the creation of Beauty — the novel collocation of old forms of the Beautiful and of the Sublime — could be advanced by the abstractions of a maudlin philosophy.

But the question is not even this. It is not whether it be not possible to introduce didacticism, with effect, into a poem, or possible to introduce poetical images and measures, with effect, into a didactic essay. To do either the one or the other would be merely to surmount a difficulty, would be simply a feat of literary sleight of hand. But the true question is, whether the author who shall attempt either feat, will not be laboring at a disadvantage, will not be guilty of a fruitless and wasteful expenditure of energy. In minor poetical efforts, we may not so imperatively demand an adherence to the true poetical thesis. We permit *trifling* to some extent, in a work which we consider a trifle at best. Although we agree, for example, with Coleridge, that poetry and passion are discordant, yet we are willing to permit Tennyson to bring, to the intense passion which prompted his "Locksley Hall," the aid of that terseness and pungency which are derivable from rhythm and from rhyme. The effect he produces, however, is a purely passionate, and not, unless in detached passages of this magnificent philippic, a properly poetic effect. His "Œnone," on the other hand, exalts the soul not into passion, but into a conception of pure *beauty*, which in its elevation, its calm and intense rapture, has in it a foreshadowing of the future and spiritual life, and as far transcends earthly passion as the holy radiance of the sun does the glimmering and feeble phosphorescence of the glowworm. His "Morte d'Arthur" is in the same majestic vein. The "Sensitive Plant" of Shelley is in the same sublime spirit. Nor, if the passionate poems of Byron excite more intensely a greater number of readers than either the "Œnone" or the "Sensitive Plant" — does this indisputable fact prove anything more

than that the majority of mankind are more susceptible of the impulses of passion than of the impressions of beauty. Readers do exist, however, and always will exist, who, to hearts of maddening fervor, unite, in perfection, the sentiment of the beautiful — that divine sixth sense which is yet so faintly understood, that sense which phrenology has attempted to embody in its organ of *ideality*, that sense which is the basis of all Cousin's dreams, that sense which speaks of GOD through His purest, if not His *sole* attribute, which proves, and which alone proves His existence.

To readers such as these — and only to such as these — must be left the decision of what the true Poesy is. And these, with *no* hesitation, will decide that the origin of Poetry lies in a thirst for a wilder Beauty than Earth supplies; that Poetry itself is the imperfect effort to quench this immortal thirst by novel combinations of beautiful forms (collocations of forms) physical or spiritual; and that this thirst when even partially allayed, this sentiment when even feebly meeting response, produces emotion to which all other human emotions are vapid and insignificant.

We shall now be fully understood. If, with Coleridge, who, however erring at times, was precisely the mind fitted to decide a question such as this — if, with him, we reject passion from the true, from the pure poetry — if we reject even passion — if we discard as feeble, as unworthy the high spirituality of the theme (which has its origin in a sense of the Godhead) — if we dismiss even the nearly divine emotion of human *love*, that emotion which merely to name causes the pen to tremble, — with how much greater reason shall we dismiss all else? And yet there are men who would mingle with the august theme the merest questions of

expediency, the cant topics of the day, the doggerel æsthetics of the time, who would trammel the soul in its flight to an ideal Helusion by the quirks and quibbles of chopped logic. There are men who do this; lately there are a set of men who make a practice of doing this, and who defend it on the score of the advancement of what they suppose to be *truth*. Truth is, in its own essence, sublime; but her loftiest sublimity, as derived from man's clouded and erratic reason, is valueless, is pulseless, is utterly ineffective when brought into comparison with the unerring *sense* of which we speak; yet grant this truth to be all which its seekers and worshippers pretend, they forget that it is not truth *per se* which is made their thesis, but an argumentation, often maudlin and pedantic, always shallow and unsatisfactory (as from the mere inadaptation of the vehicle it *must* be), by which this *truth*, in casual and indeterminate glimpses, is — *or is not* — rendered manifest.

We have said that, in minor poetical efforts, we may tolerate some deflection from the true poetical thesis; but when a man of the highest powers sets himself seriously to the task of constructing what shall be most worthy those powers, we expect that he shall so choose his theme as to render it certain that he labor not at disadvantage. We regret to see any trivial or partial imperfection of detail; but we grieve deeply when we detect any radical error of conception.

In setting about "Orion," Mr. Horne proposed to himself (in accordance with the views of his junto) to "elaborate a morality" — he ostensibly proposed this to himself — for, in the depths of his heart, we *know* that he wished all juntos and all moralities in Erebus. In accordance with the notions of his *set*,

however, he felt a species of shamefacedness in not making the enforcement of some certain dogmas or doctrines (questionable or unquestionable) about PROGRESS, the obvious or apparent object of his poem. This shamefacedness is the cue to the concluding sentence of the Preface. "Meantime, the design of this poem of 'Orion' is far from being intended as a mere echo or reflection of the past, and is, in itself, and in other respects, a novel experiment upon the mind of a nation." Mr. Horne conceived, in fact, that to compose a poem merely for that poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to be his purpose, would be to subject himself to the charge of imbecility, of triviality, of deficiency in the true dignity and force; but, had he listened to the dictates of his own soul, he could not have failed to perceive, at once, that under the sun there exists no work more intrinsically noble than this very poem *written solely for the poem's sake.*

But let us regard "Orion" as it is. It has an under and an upper current of meaning; in other words, it is an allegory. But the poet's sense of fitness (which under no circumstances of mere conventional opinion could be more than half subdued) has so far softened this allegory as to keep it, generally, well subject to the ostensible narrative. The purport of the moral conveyed is by no means clear — showing conclusively that the heart of the poet was not with it. It vacillates. At one time a certain set of opinions predominate, then another. We may generalize the subject, however, by calling it a homily against supineness or apathy in the cause of human PROGRESS, and in favor of energetic action for the good of the race. This is precisely *the* IDEA of the

present school of canters. How feebly the case is made out in the poem, how insufficient has been all Mr. Horne's poetical rhetoric in convincing even himself, may be gleaned from the unusual bombast, rigmarole, and mystification of the concluding paragraph, in which he has thought it necessary to say something *very* profound by way of putting the sting to his epigram, the point to his moral. The words put us much in mind of the "nonsense verses" of Du Bartas.

> "And thus, in the end, each soul may to itself,
> With truth before it as its polar guide,
> Become both Time and Nature, whose fixt paths
> Are spiral, and when lost will find new stars,
> And in the Universal MOVEMENT join."

The upper current of the theme is based upon the various Greek fables about Orion. The author, in his brief Preface, speaks about "writing from an old Greek fable;" but his story is, more properly, a very judicious selection and modification of a great variety of Greek and Roman fables concerning Orion and other personages with whom these fables bring Orion in collision. And here we have only to object that the really magnificent abilities of Mr. Horne might have been better employed in an entirely original conception. The story he tells is beautiful indeed, — and *nil tetigit*, certainly, *quod non ornavit* — but our memories, our classic recollections are continually at war with his claims to regard, and we too often find ourselves rather speculating upon what he might have done than admiring what he has really accomplished.

The narrative, as our poet has arranged it, runs nearly thus: Orion, hunting on foot amid the mountains of Chios, encounters Artemis (Diana) with her train. The goddess, at first indignant at the giant's

intrusion upon her grounds, becomes, in the second place, enamoured. Her pure love spiritualizes the merely animal nature of Orion, but does not render him happy. He is filled with vague aspirations and desires. He buries himself in sensual pleasures. In the mad dreams of intoxication, he beholds a vision of Merope, the daughter of Œnopion, king of Chios. She is the type of physical beauty. She cries in his ear,

> "Depart from Artemis! she loves thee not—
> Thou art too full of earth."

Awaking, he seeks the love of Merope. It is returned. Œnopion, dreading the giant and his brethren, yet scorning his pretensions, temporizes. He consents to bestow upon Orion the hand of Merope, on condition of the island being cleared, within six days, of its savage beasts and serpents. Orion, seeking the aid of his brethren, accomplishes the task. Œnopion again hesitates. Enraged, the giants make war upon him, and carry off the princess. In a remote grove Orion lives, in bliss, with his earthly love. From this delirium of happiness he is aroused by the vengeance of Œnopion, who causes him to be surprised while asleep, and deprived of sight. The princess, being retaken, immediately forgets and deserts her lover, who, in his wretchedness, seeks, at the suggestion of a shepherd, the aid of Eos (Aurora) who, also becoming enamoured of him, restores his sight. The love of Eos, less earthly than that of Merope, less cold than that of Artemis, fully satisfies his soul. He is at length happy. But the jealousy of Artemis destroys him. She pierces him with her arrows while in the very act of gratefully renovating her temple at Delos. In despair, Eos flies to Artemis, reproves her, represents to her the baseness of her jealousy and revenge,

softens her, and obtains her consent to unite with herself — with Eos — in a prayer to Zeus (Jupiter) for the restoration of the giant to life. The prayer is heard. Orion is not only restored to life, but rendered immortal, and placed among the constellations, where he enjoys forever the pure affection of Eos, and becomes extinguished, each morning, in her rays.

In ancient mythology the giants are meant to typify various energies of Nature. Pursuing, we suppose, this idea, Mr. Horne has made his own giants represent certain principles of human action or passion. Thus Orion himself is the Worker or Builder, and is the type of Action or Movement itself, but, in various portions of the poem, this allegorical character is left out of sight, and that of speculative philosophy takes its place; a mere consequence of the general uncertainty of purpose, which is the chief defect of the work. Sometimes we even find Orion a Destroyer in place of a Builder — as, for example, when he destroys the grove about the temple of Artemis, at Delos. Here he usurps the proper allegorical attribute of Rhexergon (the second of the seven giants named), who is the Breaker-down, typifying the Revolutionary Principle. Autarces, the third, represents the Mob, or, more strictly, Waywardness, Capricious Action. Harpax, the fourth, serves for Rapine; Biastor, the fifth, for Brute Force; Encolyon, the sixth, the "Chainer of the Wheel," for Conservatism; and Akinetos, the seventh, and most elaborated, for Apathy. He is termed "The Great Unmoved," and in his mouth is put all the "worldly wisdom," or selfishness, of the tale. The philosophy of Akinetos is that no merely human exertion has any appreciable effect upon the Movement; and it is amusing to per-

ceive how this great *Truth* (for most sincerely do we hold it to be such) speaks out from the real heart of the poet, through his Akinetos, in spite of all endeavor to overthrow it by the example of the brighter fate of Orion.

The death of Akinetos is a singularly forcible and poetic conception, and will serve to show how the giants are made to perish, generally, during the story, in agreement with their allegorical natures. The "Great Unmoved" quietly seats himself in a cave after the death of all his brethren except Orion.

> "Thus Akinetos sat from day to day,
> Absorbed in indolent sublimity,
> Reviewing thoughts and knowledge o'er and o'er;
> And now he spake, now sung unto himself,
> Now sank to brooding silence. From above,
> While passing, Time the rock touched! — and it oozed
> Petrific drops — gently at first — and slow.
> Reclining lonely in his fixt repose,
> The Great Unmoved unconsciously became
> Attached to that he pressed; and soon a part
> Of the rock. *There clung the excrescence, till strong hands,*
> *Descended from Orion, made large roads,*
> *And built steep walls, squaring down rocks for use.*"

The italicised conclusion of this fine passage affords an instance, however, of a very blamable concision, too much affected throughout the poem.

In the deaths of Autarces, Harpax, and Encolyon, we recognize the same exceeding vigor of conception. These giants conspire against Orion, who seeks the aid of Artemis, who, in her turn, seeks the assistance of Phoibos (Phœbus). The conspirators are in a cave, with Orion.

> "Now Phoibos through the cave
> Sent a broad ray! . . . the solar beam

Filled the great cave with radiance equable,
And not a cranny held one speck of shade.
A moony halo round Orion came,
As of some pure protecting influence,
While with intense light glared the walls and roof,
The heat increasing. The three giants stood
With glazing eyes, fixed. Terribly the light
Beat on the dazzled stone, and the cave hummed
With reddening heat, till the red hair and beard
Of Harpax shewed no difference from the rest,
Which once were iron-black. The sullen walls
Then smouldered down to steady oven-heat,
Like that with care attained when bread has ceased
Its steaming, and displays an angry tan.
The appallèd faces of the giants shewed
Full consciousness of their immediate doom.
And soon the cave a potter's furnace glowed,
Or kiln for largest bricks, and thus remained
The while Orion, in his halo clasped
By some invisible power, beheld the clay
Of these his early friends change. Life was gone!

"Now sank the heat — the cave-walls lost their glare —
The red lights faded, and the halo pale
Around him into chilly air expanded.
There stood the three great images, in hue
Of chalky white and red, like those strange shapes
In Egypt's regal tombs; but presently
Each visage and each form with cracks and flaws
Was seamed, and the lost countenance brake up,
As, with brief toppling, forward prone they fell."

The deaths of Rhexergon and Biastor seem to discard (and this we regret not) the allegorical meaning altogether, but are related with even more exquisite richness and delicacy of imagination than those of the other giants. Upon this occasion it is the *jealousy* of Artemis which destroys: —

"But with the eve
Fatigue o'ercame the giants, and they slept.

Dense were the rolling clouds, starless the gloom,
But o'er a narrow rift, once drawn apart,
Shewing a field remote of violet hue,
The high Moon floated, and her downward gleam
Shone on the upturned giant faces. Rigid
Each upper feature, loose the nether jaw;
Their arms cast wide with open palms; their chests
Heaving like some large engine. Near them lay
Their bloody clubs with dust and hair begrimed,
Their spears and girdles, and the long-noosed thongs.
Artemis vanished; all again was dark.

"With day's first streak Orion rose, and loudly
To his companions called. But still they slept.
Again he shouted; yet no limb they stirred,
Though scarcely seven strides distant. He approached,
And found the spot, so sweet with clover flower
When they had cast them down, was now arrayed
With many-headed poppies, like a crowd
Of dusky Ethiops in a magic cirque,
Which had sprung up beneath them in the night,
And all entranced the air."

There are several minor defects in "Orion," and we may as well mention them here. We sometimes meet with an instance of bad taste in a revolting picture or image; for example, at page 59, of this edition: —

"Naught fearing, swift, brimful of raging life,
Lay stiffening in black pools of jellied gore."

Sometimes — indeed, very often — we encounter an altogether purposeless oddness or foreignness of speech. For example, at page 78: —

"As in Dodona once, ere driven thence
By Zeus *for that* Rhexergon burnt some oaks."

Mr. Horne will find it impossible to assign a good reason for not here using "because."

Pure *vaguenesses* of speech abound. For example, page 89: —

"one central heart, wherein
Time beats twin-pulses with Humanity."

Now and then sentences are rendered needlessly obscure through mere involution — as at page 103:

"Star-rays that first played o'er my blinded orbs,
E'en as they glance above the lids of Sleep,
Who else had never known surprise, nor hope,
Nor useful action."

Here the "who" has no grammatical antecedent, and would naturally be referred to sleep; whereas it is intended for "me," understood, or involved, in the pronoun "my;" as if the sentence were written thus — "rays that first played o'er the blinded orbs of me, who," etc. It is useless to dwell upon so pure an affectation.

The versification throughout is, generally, of a very remarkable excellence. At times, however, it is rough, to no purpose; as at page 44: —

"And ever tended to some central point
In some place — nought more could I understand."

And here, at page 81: —

"The shadow of a stag stoops to the stream,
Swift rolling towards the cataract, and drinks deeply."

The above is an unintentional and false Alexandrine — including a foot too much, and that a trochee in place of an iambus. But here, at page 106, we have the utterly unjustifiable anomaly of half a foot too little: —

"*And Eos ever rises, circling*
The varied regions of mankind," etc.

All these are mere inadvertences, of course; for the general handling of the rhythm shows the profound metrical sense of the poet. He is, perhaps, somewhat too fond of "making the sound an echo to the sense." "Orion" embodies some of the most remarkable instances of this on record; but if smoothness, if the true rhythm of a verse be sacrificed, the sacrifice is an error. The effect is only a beauty, we think, where no sacrifice is made in its behalf. It will be found possible to reconcile all the objects in view. Nothing can justify such lines as this, at page 69: —

"As snake-songs midst stone hollows, thus has taught me."

We might urge, as another minor objection, that all the giants are made to speak in the same manner — with the same phraseology. Their characters are broadly distinctive, while their words are identical in spirit. There is sufficient individuality of sentiment, but little, or none, of language.

We *must* object, too, to the personal and political allusions — to the Corn-Law question, for example, to Wellington's statue, etc. These things, *of course*, have no business in a poem.

We will conclude our fault-finding with the remark that, as a consequence of the one radical error of conception upon which we have commented at length, the reader's attention, throughout, is painfully *diverted*. He is always pausing, amid poetical beauties, in the expectation of detecting among them some philosophical, allegorical moral. Of course, he does not fully, because he cannot uniquely, appreciate the beauties. The absolute necessity of re-perusing the poem, in order thoroughly to comprehend it, is also, most surely, to be regretted, and arises, likewise, from the one radical sin.

But of the *beauties* of this most remarkable poem, what shall we say? And here we find it a difficult task to be calm. And yet we have never been accused of enthusiastic encomium. It is our deliberate opinion that, in all that regards the loftiest and holiest attributes of the true Poetry, "Orion" has *never* been excelled. Indeed, we feel strongly inclined to say that it has never been *equalled.* Its imagination — that quality which is all in all — is of the most refined, the most elevating, the most august character. And here we deeply regret that the necessary limits of this review will prevent us from entering, at length, into specification. In reading the poem, we marked passage after passage for extract; but, in the end, we found that we had marked nearly every passage in the book. We can now do nothing more than select a few. This, from page 3, introduces Orion himself, and we quote it, not only as an instance of refined and picturesque imagination, but as evincing the high artistical skill with which a scholar in spirit can paint an elaborate picture by a few brief touches: —

"The scene in front two sloping mountain sides
Displayed; in shadow one, and one in light.
The loftiest on its summit now sustained
The sun-beams, raying like a mighty wheel
Half seen, which left the forward surface dark
In its full breadth of shade; the coming sun
Hidden as yet behind; the other mount,
Slanting transverse, swept with an eastward face,
Catching the golden light. Now while the peal
Of the ascending chase told that the rout
Still midway rent the thickets, suddenly
Along the broad and sunny slope appeared
The shadow of a stag that fled across,
Followed by a Giant's shadow with a spear!"

These shadows are those of the coming Orion and his game. But who can fail to appreciate the intense beauty of the heralding shadows? Nor is this all. This "Hunter of shadows, he himself a shade," is made symbolical, or suggestive, throughout the poem, of the speculative character of Orion; and, occasionally, of his pursuit of visionary happiness. For example, at page 81, Orion, possessed of Merope, dwells with her in a remote and dense grove of cedars. Instead of directly describing his attained happiness, his perfected bliss, the poet with an exalted sense of Art, *for which we look utterly in vain in any other poem*, merely introduces the image of the tamed or subdued *shadow-stag* quietly browsing and drinking beneath the cedars.

> "There, underneath the boughs, mark where the gleam
> Of sunrise through the roofing's chasm is thrown
> Upon a grassy plot below, whereon
> The shadow of a stag stoops to the stream
> Swift rolling towards the cataract, and drinks deeply.
> Throughout the day unceasingly it drinks,
> While ever and anon the nightingale,
> Not waiting for the evening, swells his hymn —
> His one sustained and heaven-aspiring tone —
> And when the sun hath vanished utterly,
> Arm over arm the cedars spread their shade,
> With arching wrist and long extended hands,
> And graveward fingers lengthening in the moon,
> Above that shadowy stag whose antlers still
> Hung o'er the stream."

There is nothing more richly, more weirdly, more chastely, more sublimely imaginative, in the wide realm of poetical literature. It will be seen that we *have* enthusiasm, but we reserve it for pictures such as this.

At page 61, Orion, his brethren dead, is engaged alone in extirpating the beasts from Chios. In the passages we quote, observe, in the beginning, the singular *lucidness* of detail; the arrangement of the barriers, etc., by which the hunter accomplishes his purpose, is given in a dozen lines of verse, with far more perspicuity than ordinary writers could give it in as many pages of prose. In this species of narration Mr. Horne is approached only by Moore in his "Alciphron." In the latter portions of our extract, observe the vivid picturesqueness of the description.

"Four days remain. Fresh trees he felled, and wove
More barriers and fences; inaccessible
To fiercest charge of droves, and to o'erleap
Impossible. These walls he so arranged
That to a common centre each should force
The flight of those pursued; and from that centre
Diverged three outlets. One, the wide expanse
Which from the rocks and inland forests led;
One was the clear-skied windy gap above
A precipice; the third, a long ravine
Which, through steep slopes, down to the seashore ran
Winding, and then direct into the sea.

"Two days remain. Orion, in each hand
Waving a torch, his course at night began,
Through wildest haunts and lairs of savage beasts.
With long-drawn howl before him trooped the wolves —
The panthers, terror-stricken — and the bears
With wonder and gruff rage; from desolate crags,
Leering hyænas, griffin, hippogrif,
Skulked, or sprang madly, as the tossing brands
Flashed through the midnight nooks and hollows cold,
Sudden as fire from flint; o'er crashing thickets,
With crouched head and curled fangs, dashed the wild boar,
Gnashing forth on with reckless impulses,
While the clear-purposed fox crept closely down

Into the underwood, to let the storm,
Whate'er its cause, pass over. Through dark fens,
Marshes, green rushy swamps and margins reedy,
Orion held his way, — and rolling shapes
Of serpent and of dragon moved before him
With high-reared crests, swan-like yet terrible,
And often looking back with gem-like eyes.
All night Orion urged his rapid course
In the vexed rear of the swift-droving din,
And when the dawn had peered, the monsters all
Were hemmed in barriers. These he now o'erheaped
With fuel through the day, and when again
Night darkened, and the sea a gulf-like voice
Sent forth, the barriers at all points he fired,
Midst prayers to Hephæstos and his Ocean-Sire.

"Soon as the flames had eaten out a gap
In the great barrier fronting the ravine
That ran down to the sea, Orion grasped
Two blazing boughs; one high in air he raised,
The other *with its roaring foliage trailed*
Behind him as he sped. Onward the droves
Of frantic creatures with one impulse rolled
Before this night-devouring thing of flames,
With multitudinous voice and downward sweep
Into the sea, which now first knew a tide,
And, ere they made one effort to regain
The shore, had caught them in its flowing arms,
And bore them past all hope. The living mass,
Dark heaving o'er the waves resistlessly,
At length, in distance, seemed a circle small,
Midst which one creature in the centre rose,
Conspicuous in the long red quivering gleams
That from the dying brands streamed o'er the waves.
It was the oldest dragon of the fens,
Whose forky flag-wings and horn-crested head
O'er crags and marshes regal sway had held;
And now he rose up, like an embodied curse,
From all the doomed, fast sinking — some just sunk —
Looked landward o'er the sea, and flapped his vans,
Until Poseidon drew them swirling down."

Poseidon (Neptune) is Orion's father, and lends him his aid. The first line italicised is an example of sound made echo to sense. The rest we have merely emphasized as peculiarly imaginative.

At page 9, Orion thus describes a palace built by him for Hephæstos (Vulcan): —

"'But, ere a shadow-hunter I became —
A dreamer of strange dreams by day and night —
For him I built a palace underground,
Of iron, black and rough as his own hands.
Deep in the groaning disembowelled earth,
The tower-broad pillars and huge stanchions,
And slant supporting wedges, I set up,
Aided by the Cyclops who obeyed my voice,
Which through the metal fabric rang and pealed
In orders echoing far, like thunder-dreams.
With arches, galleries and domes all carved —
So that great figures started from the roof
And lofty coignes, or sat and downward gazed
On those who stood below and gazed above —
I filled it; in the centre framed a hall;
Central in that, a throne; *and for the light,*
Forged mighty hammers that should rise and fall
On slanted rocks of granite and of flint,
Worked by a torrent, for whose passage down
A chasm I hewed. And here the God could take,
Midst showery sparks and swathes of broad gold fire,
His lone repose, lulled by the sounds he loved:
Or, casting back the hammer-heads till they choked
The water's course, enjoy, if so he wished,
Midnight tremendous, silence, and iron sleep.'"

The description of the Hell in "Paradise Lost" is *altogether inferior* in graphic effect, in originality, in expression, in the true imagination — to these magnificent — to these unparalleled passages. For this assertion there are tens of thousands who will condemn

us as heretical; but there are a "chosen few" who will feel, in their inmost souls, the simple truth of the assertion. The former class would at least be silent, could they form even a remote conception of *that* contempt with which we hearken to their conventional jargon.

We have room for no further extracts of length; but we refer the reader who shall be so fortunate as to procure a copy of "Orion," to a passage at page 22, commencing

> "One day at noontide, when the chase was done."

It is descriptive of a group of lolling hounds, intermingled with sylvans, fauns, nymphs, and Oceanides. We refer him also to page 26, where Orion, enamoured of the naked beauty of Artemis, is repulsed and *frozen* by her dignity. These lines end thus: —

> "And ere the last collected shape he saw
> Of Artemis, dispersing fast amid
> Dense vapory clouds, the aching wintriness
> Had risen to his teeth, and fixed his eyes,
> Like glistening stones in the congealing air."

We refer, especially, too, to the description of *Love*, at page 29; to that of a Bacchanalian orgy, at page 34; to that of drought succeeded by rain, at page 70; and to that of the palace of Eos, at page 104.

Mr. Horne has a very peculiar and very delightful faculty of enforcing, or giving vitality, to a picture, by some one vivid and intensely characteristic point or touch. He seizes the most salient feature of his theme, and makes this feature convey the whole. The combined *naïveté* and picturesqueness of some of the pas-

sages thus enforced, cannot be sufficiently admired. For example: —

> "The archers soon
> *With bow-arm forward thrust*, on all sides twanged
> Around, below, above."

Now, it is this thrusting forward of the bow-arm which is the idiosyncrasy of the action of a mass of archers. Again, Rhexergon and his friends endeavor to persuade Akinetos to be king. Observe the silent refusal of Akinetos, the peculiar *passiveness* of his action, if we may be permitted the paradox: —

> "'Rise, therefore, Akinetos, thou art king!'
> So saying, in his hand he placed a spear.
> *As though against a wall 't were set aslant*,
> *Flatly the long spear fell upon the ground.*"

Here again, Merope departs from Chios in a ship:

> "And, as it sped along, she closely pressed
> The rich globes of her bosom on the side
> O'er which she bent with those black eyes, and gazed
> Into the sea *that fled beneath her face.*"

The fleeing of the sea beneath the face of one who gazes into it from a ship's side, is the idiosyncrasy of the action — of the subject. It is that which chiefly impresses the gazer.

We conclude with some brief quotations at random, which we shall not pause to classify. Their merits need no demonstration. They *gleam* with the purest imagination. They abound in picturesqueness, force, happily chosen epithets, each in itself a picture. They are redolent of all for which a poet will value a poem: —

> "her silver sandals glanced i' the rays,
> As doth a lizard playing on a hill,

And on the spot where she that instant stood
Nought but the bent and quivering grass was seen.

" Above the Isle of Chios, night by night,
The clear moon lingered ever on her course
Covering the forest foliage, where it swept
In its unbroken breadth along the slopes,
With placid silver ; edging leaf and trunk
Where gloom clung deep around ; but chiefly sought
With melancholy splendor to illume
The dark-mouthed caverns where Orion lay,
Dreaming among his kinsmen."

" The ocean realm below, and all its caves
And bristling vegetation, plant and flower,
And forests in their dense petrific shade
Where the tides moan for sleep which never comes."

" A faun, who on a quiet green knoll sat
Somewhat apart, sang a melodious ode,
Made rich by harmonies of hidden strings."

" Autarces seized a satyr, with intent,
Despite his writhing freaks and furious face,
To dash him on a gong, but that amidst
The struggling mass Encolyon thrust a pine,
Heavy and black as Charon's ferrying pole,
O'er which they, *like a bursting billow*, fell."

" then round the blaze,
Their shadows brandishing afar and athwart
Over the level space and up the hills,
Six giants held portentous dance."

" his safe return
To corporal sense, by shaking off these nets
Of moonbeams from his soul."

" Old memories
Slumbrously hung above the purple line
Of distance, to the east, while odorously
Glistened the tear-drops of a new-fallen shower."

" Sing on !
Sing on, great tempest ! in the darkness sing !

Thy madness is a music that brings calm
Into my central soul; and from its waves,
That now with joy begin to heave and gush,
The burning image of all life's desire,
Like an absorbing firebreathed phantom god,
Rises and floats! — here touching on the foam,
There hovering over it; *ascending swift*
Starward, then swooping down the hemisphere
Upon the lengthening javelins of the blast!"

"Now a sound we heard,
Like to some well-known voice in prayer; and next
An iron clang *that seemed to break great bonds*
Beneath the earth, shook us to conscious life."

"It is Oblivion! In his hand — though nought
Knows he of this — a dusky purple flower
Droops over its tall stem. Again! ah see!
He wanders into mist and now is lost! —
Within his brain what lovely realms of death
Are pictured, *and what knowledge through the doors*
Of his forgetfulness of all the earth
A path may gain?"

But we are positively forced to conclude. It was our design to give "Orion" a careful and methodical analysis — thus to bring clearly forth its multitudinous beauties to the eye of the American public. Our limits have constrained us to treat it in an imperfect and cursory manner. We have had to content ourselves chiefly with assertion, where our original purpose was to demonstrate. We have left unsaid a hundred things which a well-grounded enthusiasm would have prompted us to say. One thing, however, we must and will say, in conclusion. "Orion" will be admitted, by every man of genius, to be one of the noblest, if not the very noblest poetical work of the age. Its defects are trivial and conventional — its beauties intrinsic and *supreme*.

MISS BARRETT'S "A DRAMA OF EXILE, AND OTHER POEMS"

"A WELL-BRED *man*," says Sir James Puckle, in his "Gray Cap for a Green Head," "will never give himself the liberty to speak ill of women." We emphasize the "man." Setting aside, for the present, certain rare commentators and compilers of the species ——, creatures neither precisely men, women, nor Mary Wollstonecrafts — setting these aside as unclassifiable, we may observe that the race of critics are masculine — men. With the exception, perhaps, of Mrs. Anne Royal, we can call to mind no female who has occupied, even temporarily, the Zoilus throne. And this, the Salic law, is an evil; for the inherent chivalry of the critical *man* renders it not only an unpleasant task to him "to speak ill of a woman" (and a woman and her book are identical), but an almost impossible task not to laud her *ad nauseam*. In general, therefore, it is the unhappy lot of the authoress to be subjected, time after time, to the downright degradation of mere puffery. On her own side of the Atlantic, Miss Barrett has indeed, in one instance at least, escaped the infliction of this lamentable contumely and wrong; but if she had been really solicitous of its infliction in America, she could not have adopted a more effectual plan than that of saying a few words about "the great American

people," in an American edition of her work, published under the superintendence of an American author. Of the innumerable "native" notices of the "Drama of Exile" which have come under our observation, we can call to mind *not one* in which there is anything more remarkable than the critic's dogged determination to find *nothing* barren, from Beersheba to Dan. Another, in the "Democratic Review," has proceeded so far, it is true, as to venture a *very* delicate insinuation to the effect that the poetess "will not fail to speak her mind *though it bring upon her a bad rhyme;*" beyond this, nobody has proceeded; and as for the elaborate paper in the new "Whig Monthly," all that anybody can say or think, and all that Miss Barrett can feel respecting it is, that it is an eulogy as well written as it is an insult well intended. Now of all the friends of the fair author, we doubt whether one exists with more profound, with more enthusiastic, reverence and admiration of her genius than the writer of these words. And it is for this very reason, beyond all others, that he intends to speak of her *the truth.* Our chief regret is, nevertheless, that the limits of this work will preclude the possibility of our speaking this truth so fully, and so much in detail, as we could wish. By far the most valuable criticism that we, or that any one could give, of the volumes now lying before us, would be the quotation of three-fourths of their contents. But we have this advantage — that the work has been long published, and almost universally read — and thus, in some measure, we may proceed, concisely, as if the text of our context were an understood thing.

In her preface to this, the "American edition" of

her late poems, Miss Barrett, speaking of the "Drama of Exile," says: — "I decided on publishing it, after considerable hesitation and doubt. The subject of the drama rather fastened on me than was chosen; and the form, approaching the model of the Greek tragedy, shaped itself under my hand rather by force of pleasure than of design. But when the compositional excitement had subsided, I felt afraid of my position. My own object was the new and strange experience of the fallen Humanity, as it went forth from Paradise into the wilderness; with a peculiar reference to Eve's allotted grief, which, considering that self-sacrifice belonged to her womanhood, and the consciousness of being the organ of the Fall to her offence, appeared to me imperfectly apprehended hitherto, and more expressible by a woman than a man." In this abstract announcement of the theme, it is difficult to understand the ground of the poet's hesitation to publish; for the theme in itself seems admirably adapted to the purposes of the closet drama. The poet, nevertheless, is, very properly, conscious of failure — a failure which occurs not in the general, but in the particular conception, and which must be placed to the account of "the model of the Greek tragedies." The Greek tragedies *had*, and even *have*, high merits; but we act wisely in now substituting for the external and typified human sympathy of the antique Chorus, a direct, internal, living and moving sympathy itself; and although Æschylus might have done service as "a model" to either Euripides or Sophocles, yet were Sophocles and Euripides in London to-day, they would, perhaps, while granting a certain formless and shadowy grandeur, indulge a quiet smile at the shallowness and uncouthness of that Art, which, in the

old amphitheatres, had beguiled them into applause of the "Œdipus at Colonos."

It would have been better for Miss Barrett if, throwing herself independently upon her own very extraordinary resources and forgetting that a Greek had ever lived, she had involved her Eve in a series of adventures merely natural; or if not this, of adventures preternatural within the limits of at least a conceivable relation — a relation of matter to spirit, and spirit to matter, that should have left room for something like palpable action and comprehensible emotion, that should not have utterly precluded the development of that womanly character which is admitted as the principal object of the poem. As the case actually stands, it is only in a few snatches of verbal intercommunication with Adam and Lucifer, that we behold her as a woman at all. For the rest, she is a mystical something or nothing, enwrapped in a fog of rhapsody about Transfiguration, and the Seed, and the Bruising of the Heel, and other talk of a nature that no man ever pretended to understand in plain prose, and which, when solar-microscoped into poetry "upon the model of the Greek drama," is about as convincing as the Egyptian Lectures of Mr. Silk Buckingham — about as much to any purpose under the sun as the *hi presto* conjurations of Signor Blitz. What are we to make, for example, of dramatic colloquy such as this? — the words are those of a Chorus of Invisible Angels addressing Adam: —

"Live, work on, O Earthy!
By the Actual's tension
Speed the arrow worthy
Of a pure ascension!
From the low earth round you
Reach the heights above you;

From the stripes that wound you
Seek the loves that love you!
God's divinest burneth plain
Through the crystal diaphane
Of our loves that love you."

Now we do not mean to assert that, by excessive "tension" of the intellect, a reader accustomed to the cant of the transcendentalists (or of those who degrade an ennobling philosophy by styling themselves such) may not succeed in ferreting from the passage quoted, and indeed from each of the thousand similar ones throughout the book, something that shall bear the aspect of an absolute idea; but we do mean to say, first, that in nine cases out of ten, the thought when dug out will be found very poorly to repay the labor of the digging; for it is the nature of thought in general, as it is the nature of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial. And we do mean to say, secondly, that, in nineteen cases out of twenty, the reader will suffer the most valuable ore to remain unmined to all eternity before he will be put to the trouble of digging for it one inch. And we do mean to assert, thirdly, that no reader is to be condemned for not putting himself to the trouble of digging even the one inch; for no writer has the right to impose any such necessity upon him. What is worth thinking, is distinctly thought; what is distinctly thought, can and should be distinctly expressed, or should not be expressed at all. Nevertheless, there is no more appropriate opportunity than the present for admitting and maintaining, at once, what has never before been either maintained or admitted — that there is a justifiable exception to the rule for which we contend. It is where the design is to con-

vey the fantastic, not the obscure. To give the idea of the latter we need, as in general, the most precise and definitive terms; and those who employ other terms but confound obscurity of expression with the expression of obscurity. The fantastic in itself, however, — phantasm, — may be materially furthered in its development by the *quaint* in phraseology: — a proposition which any moralist may examine at his leisure for himself.

The "Drama of Exile" opens with a very palpable *bull:* — "Scene, the outer side of the gate of Eden, shut fast with clouds — [a scene out of sight!] — from the depth of which revolves the sword of fire self-moved. A watch of innumerable angels, rank above rank, slopes up from around it to the zenith; and the glare, cast from their brightness and from the sword, extends many miles into the wilderness. Adam and Eve are seen in the distance, flying along the glare. The angel Gabriel and Lucifer are beside the gate." — These are the "stage directions" which greet us on the threshold of the book. We complain first of the bull; secondly, of the blue-fire melodramatic aspect of the revolving sword; thirdly, of the duplicate nature of the sword, which, if steel, and sufficiently inflamed to do service in burning, would, perhaps, have been in no temper to cut; and on the other hand, if sufficiently cool to have an edge, would have accomplished little in the way of scorching a personage so well accustomed to fire and brimstone, and all that, as we have very good reason to believe Lucifer was. We cannot help objecting, too, to the "innumerable angels," as a force altogether disproportioned to the one enemy to be kept out; either the self-moving sword itself, we think, or the angel Gabriel alone, or

five or six of the "innumerable" angels, would have sufficed to keep the devil (or is it Adam?) outside of the gate — which, after all, he might not have been able to discover, on account of the clouds.

Far be it from us, however, to dwell irreverently on matters which have venerability in the faith or in the fancy of Miss Barrett. We allude to these *niaiseries* at all — found here in the very first paragraph of her poem — simply by way of putting in the clearest light the mass of inconsistency and antagonism in which her *subject* has inextricably involved her. She has made allusion to Milton, and no doubt felt secure in her theme (as a theme merely) when she considered his "Paradise Lost." But even in Milton's own day, when men had the habit of believing all things, the more nonsensical the more readily, and of worshipping in blind acquiescence the most preposterous of impossibilities — even *then*, there were not wanting individuals who would have read the great epic with more zest, could it have been explained to their satisfaction, how and why it was, not only that a snake quoted Aristotle's ethics and behaved otherwise pretty much as he pleased, but that bloody battles were continually being fought between bloodless "innumerable angels" that found no inconvenience in losing a wing one minute and a head the next, and if pounded up into puff-paste late in the afternoon were as good "innumerable angels" as new the next morning, in time to be at *réveillé* roll-call. And now — at the present epoch — there are few people who do not occasionally *think*. This is emphatically the thinking age; indeed, it may very well be questioned whether mankind ever substantially thought before. The fact is, if the "Paradise

Lost" were written to-day (assuming that it had never been written when it was), not even its eminent, although over-estimated merits, would counter-balance, either in the public view or in the opinion of any critic at once intelligent and honest, the multitudinous incongruities which are part and parcel of its plot.

But in the plot of the drama of Miss Barrett it is something even worse than incongruity which affronts: a continuous mystical strain of ill-fitting and exaggerated allegory — if, indeed, allegory is not much too respectable a term for it. We are called upon, for example, to sympathize in the whimsical woes of two Spirits, who, upspringing from the bowels of the earth, set immediately to bewailing their miseries in jargon such as this: —

"I am the spirit of the harmless earth;
God spake me softly out among the stars,
As softly as a blessing of much worth;
And then His smile did follow unawares,
That all things, fashioned so for use and duty,
Might shine anointed with His chrism of beauty —
Yet I wail!
I drove on with the worlds exultingly,
Obliquely down the Godlight's gradual fall —
Individual aspect and complexity
Of gyratory orb and interval,
Lost in the fluent motion of delight
Toward the high ends of Being, beyond Sight —
Yet I wail!"

Innumerable other spirits discourse successively after the same fashion, each ending every stanza of his lamentation with the "Yet I wail!" When at length they have fairly made an end, Eve touches Adam upon the elbow, and hazards, also, the profound and pathetic observation, — "They wail, be-

loved!" — which is nothing more than the simple truth — for they *do* — and God deliver us from any such wailing again!

It is not our purpose, however, to demonstrate what every reader of these volumes will have readily seen self-demonstrated — the utter indefensibility of the "Drama of Exile," considered uniquely as a work of art. We have none of us to be told that a medley of metaphysical recitatives, sung out of tune at Adam and Eve by all manner of inconceivable abstractions, is not exactly the best material for a poem. Still it may very well happen that among this material there shall be individual passages of great beauty. But should any one doubt the possibility, let him be satisfied by a single extract such as follows: —

> "On a mountain peak
> Half sheathed in primal woods, and glittering
> In *spasms of awful sunshine*, at that hour
> A lion couched, — part raised upon his paws,
> *With his calm, massive face turned full on thine,*
> *And his mane listening.* When the ended curse
> Left silence in the world, — right suddenly
> He sprang up rampant, and stood straight and stiff,
> *As if the new reality of death*
> *Were dashed against his eyes*, — and roared so fierce
> (*Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat*
> *Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear*) —
> And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills
> Such *fast, keen echoes crumbling down the vales*
> To distant silence, — that the forest beasts,
> One after one, did mutter a response
> In savage and in sorrowful complaint
> *Which trailed along the gorges.*"

There is an Homeric force here, a vivid picturesqueness which all men will appreciate and admire. It

is, however, the longest quotable passage in the drama, not disfigured with blemishes of importance; although there are many — very many passages of a far loftier order of excellence, so disfigured, and which, therefore, it would not suit our immediate purpose to extract. The truth is — and it may be as well mentioned at this point as elsewhere — that we are not to look in Miss Barrett's works for any examples of what has been occasionally termed "sustained effort;" for neither are there, in any of her poems, any long commendable paragraphs, nor are there any individual compositions which will bear the slightest examination as consistent Art-products. Her wild and magnificent genius seems to have contented itself with points — to have exhausted itself in flashes; — but it is the profusion — the unparalleled number and close propinquity of these points and flashes which render her book *one flame*, and justify us in calling her, unhesitatingly, the greatest, the most glorious of her sex.

The "Drama of Exile" calls for little more, in the way of comment, than what we have generally said. Its finest particular feature is, perhaps, the rapture of Eve — rapture bursting through despair — upon discovering that she still possesses in the unwavering love of Adam an undreamed-of and priceless treasure. The poem ends, as it commences, with a bull. The last sentence gives us to understand that "there is a sound through the silence, as of the falling tears of an angel." How there can be sound during silence, and how an audience are to distinguish, by such sound, angel tears from any other species of tears, it may be as well, perhaps, not too particularly to inquire.

Next, in length, to the "Drama" is, "A Vision

of Poets." We object to the didacticism of its design, which the poetess thus states: "I have attempted to express in this poem my view of the mission of the veritable poet — of the self-abnegation implied in it, of the uses of sorrow suffered in it, of the great work accomplished in it through suffering, and of the duty and glory of what Balzac has beautifully and truly called '*la patience angélique du génie.*'" This "view" may be correct, but neither its correctness nor its falsity has anything to do with a poem. If a thesis is to be demonstrated, we need prose for its demonstration. In this instance, so far as the allegorical instruction and argumentation are lost sight of in the upper current, so far as the main admitted intention of the work is kept out of view — so far only is the work a poem, and so far only is the poem worth notice, or worthy of its author. Apart from its poetical character, the composition is thoughtful, vivid, epigrammatic, and abundant in just observation, although the critical opinions introduced are not always our own. A reviewer in "Blackwood's Magazine," quoting many of these critical portraits, takes occasion to find fault with the grammar of this tristich: —

> "Here, Æschylus, the women swooned
> To see so awful when he frowned
> As the gods did, — he standeth crowned."

"What on earth," says the critic, "are we to make of the words 'the women swooned to see so awful'? . . . The syntax will punish future commentators as much as some of his own corrupt choruses." In general, we are happy to agree with this reviewer, whose decisions respecting the book are, upon the whole, so nearly coincident with ours, that we hesitated, through

fear of repetition, to undertake a critique at all, until we considered that we might say a very great deal in simply supplying his omissions; but he frequently errs through mere hurry, and never did he err more singularly than at the point now in question. He evidently supposes that "awful" has been misused as an adverb and made referable to "women." But not so; and although the construction of the passage is unjustifiably involute, its grammar is intact. Disentangling the construction, we make this evident at once: "Here Æschylus (he) standeth crowned, (whom) the women swooned to see so awful, when he frowned as the gods did." The "he" is excessive, and the "whom" is understood. Respecting the lines,

> "Euripides, with close and mild
> Scholastic lips, — that could be wild,
> And laugh or sob out like a child
> Right in the classes —"

the critic observes: — "'Right in the classes' throws our intellect completely upon its beam-ends." But, if so, the fault possibly lies in the crankness of the intellect; for the words themselves mean merely that Euripides laughed or cried like a school-boy — like a child right (or just) in his classes — one who had not yet left school. The phrase is affected, we grant, but quite intelligible. A still more remarkable misapprehension occurs in regard to the triplet,

> "And Goethe — with that reaching eye
> His soul reached out from, far and high,
> And fell from inner entity."

The reviewer's remarks upon this are too preposterous not to be quoted in full; — we doubt if any commentator of equal dignity ever so egregiously

committed himself before. "Goethe," he says, "is a perfect enigma; what does the word 'fell' mean? δεινός we suppose — that is, 'not to be trifled with.' But surely it sounds very strange, although it may be true enough, to say that his 'fellness" is occasioned by 'inner entity.' But perhaps the line has some deeper meaning which we are unable to fathom." Perhaps it has: and this is the criticism, the British criticism, the "Blackwood" criticism, to which we have so long implicitly bowed down! As before, Miss Barrett's verses are needlessly involved, but their meaning requires no Œdipus. Their construction is thus intended: — "And Goethe, with that reaching eye from which his soul reached out, far and high, and (in so reaching) fell from inner entity." The plain prose is this: — Goethe (the poet would say), in involving himself too far and too profoundly in external speculations — speculations concerning the world without him — neglected, or made miscalculations concerning his inner entity, or being, — concerning the world within. This idea is involved in the metaphor of a person leaning from a window so far that finally he falls from it — the person being the soul, the window the eye.

Of the twenty-eight "Sonnets," which immediately succeed the "Drama of Exile," and which receive the especial commendation of "Blackwood," we have no very enthusiastic opinion. The *best* sonnet is objectionable from its extreme artificiality; and, to be effective, this species of composition requires a minute management, a well-controlled dexterity of touch, compatible neither with Miss Barrett's deficient constructiveness nor with the fervid rush and whirl of her genius. Of the particular instances here given,

we prefer "The Prisoner," of which the conclusion is particularly beautiful. In general, the themes are obtrusively metaphysical, or didactic.

"The Romaunt of the Page," an imitation of the old English ballad, is neither very original in subject nor very skilfully put together. We speak comparatively, of course. It is not very good — for Miss Barrett; and what we have said of this poem will apply equally to a very similar production, "Rhyme of the Duchess May." "The Poet and the Bird," "A Child Asleep," "Crowned and Wedded," "Crowned and Buried," "To Flush, my Dog," "The Four-fold Aspect," "A Flower in a Letter," "A Lay of the Early Rose," "That Day," "L. E. L.'s Last Question," "Catarina to Camoëns," "Wine of Cyprus," "The Dead Pan," "Sleeping and Watching," "A Portrait," "The Mourning Mother," and "A Valediction," although all burning with divine fire, manifested only in scintillations, have nothing in them idiosyncratic. "The House of Clouds" and "The Lost Bower" are superlatively lovely, and show the vast powers of the poet in the field best adapted to their legitimate display; the *themes*, here, could not be improved. The former poem is purely imaginative; the latter is unobjectionably because unobtrusively suggestive of a moral, and is, perhaps, upon the whole, the most admirable composition in the two volumes, or, if it is not, then "The Lay of the Brown Rosary" is. In this last the ballad-character is elevated, etherealized, and thus made to afford scope for an ideality at once the richest and most vigorous in the world. The peculiar foibles of the author are here too, dropped bodily, as a mantle, in the tumultuous movement and excitement of the narrative.

Miss Barrett has need only of *real* self-interest in her subjects, to do justice to her subjects and to herself. On the other hand, "A Rhapsody of Life's Progress," although gleaming with cold coruscations, is the least meritorious because the most philosophical effusion of the whole: — this, we say, in flat contradiction of the "*σπουδαιότατον καὶ φιλοσοφώτατον γένος*" of Aristotle. "The Cry of the Human" is singularly effective, not more from the vigor and ghastly passion of its thought than from the artistically-conceived arabesquerie of its rhythm. "The Cry of the Children," similar, although superior in tone and handling, is full of a nervous unflinching energy — a horror sublime in its simplicity — of which a far greater than Dante might have been proud. "Bertha in the Lane," a rich ballad, very singularly excepted from the wholesale commendation of the "Democratic Review," as "perhaps not one of the best," and designated by "Blackwood," on the contrary, as "decidedly the finest poem of the collection," is not the very best, we think, only because mere pathos, however exquisite, cannot be ranked with the loftiest exhibitions of the ideal. Of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," the magazine last quoted observes that "some pith is put forth in its passionate parts." We will not pause to examine the delicacy or lucidity of the metaphor embraced in the "*putting forth* of some pith;" but unless by "some pith" itself is intended the utmost conceivable intensity and vigor, then the critic is merely damning with faint praise. With the exception of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," we have never perused a poem combining so much of the fiercest passion with so much of the most ethereal fancy as the "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" of

Miss Barrett. We are forced to admit, however, that the latter work is a very palpable imitation of the former, which it surpasses in plot, or rather in thesis, as much as it falls below it in artistical management, and a certain calm energy, lustrous and indomitable, such as we might imagine in a broad river of molten gold.

It is in the "Lady Geraldine" that the critic of "Blackwood" is again put at fault in the comprehension of a couple of passages. He confesses his inability "to make out the construction of the words,— 'all that spirits pure and ardent are cast out of love and reverence, because chancing not to hold.'" There are comparatively few American school-boys who could not parse it. The prosaic construction would run thus: — "all *that* (wealth understood) because chancing not to hold *which* (or on account of not holding which), all pure and ardent spirits are cast out of love and reverence." The "which" is involved in the relative pronoun "that" — the second word of the sentence. *All that we know is, that Miss Barrett is right:* — here is a parallel phrase, meaning — "all that (which) we know," etc. The fact is, that the accusation of imperfect grammar would have been more safely, if more generally, urged; in descending to particular exceptions, the reviewer has been doing little more than exposing himself at all points.

Turning aside, however, from grammar, he declares his incapacity to fathom the meaning of

> "She has halls and she has castles, and the resonant steam-eagles
> *Follow far on the directing of her floating dove-like hand* —
> With a thunderous vapor trailing underneath the starry vigils,
> So to mark upon the blasted heaven the measure of her land."

Now it must be understood that he is profoundly

serious in his declaration — he really does not apprehend the thought designed — and he is even more than profoundly serious, too, in intending these his own comments upon his own stolidity for wit: — "We thought that steam-coaches generally followed the directing of no hand except the stoker's, but *it*, certainly, is always much *liker* a raven than a dove. After this, who shall question the infallibility of "Christopher North"? We presume there are very few of our readers who will not easily appreciate the richly imaginative conception of the poetess: — The Lady Geraldine is supposed to be standing in her own door (positively *not* on the top of an engine), and thence pointing "with her floating dove-like hand" to the lines of vapor, from the "resonant steam-eagles," that designate upon the "blasted heaven" the remote boundaries of her domain. — But, perhaps, we are guilty of a very gross absurdity ourselves, in commenting *at all* upon the whimsicalities of a reviewer who can deliberately *select* for special animadversion the second of the four verses we here copy: —

"'Eyes,' he said, 'now throbbing through me! are ye eyes that did undo me?
Shining eyes, like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone!
Underneath that calm white forehead are ye ever burning torrid
O'er the desolate sand-desert of my heart and life undone?'"

The ghost of the Great Frederick might, to be sure, quote at us, in his own Latin, his favorite adage, "*De gustibus non est disputand*us;" but, when we take into consideration the moral designed, the weirdness of effect intended, and the historical adaptation of the fact alluded to, in the line italicised (a fact of which it is by no means impossible that the critic is ignorant), we cannot refrain from expressing our conviction —

and we here *express it* in the teeth of the whole horde of the Ambrosianians — that from the entire range of poetical literature there shall not, in a century, be produced a more sonorous, a more vigorous verse — a juster, a nobler, a more ideal, a more magnificent image — than this very image, in this very verse, which the most noted magazine of Europe has so especially and so contemptuously condemned.

The "Lady Geraldine" is, we think, the only poem of its author which is not deficient, considered as an artistical whole. Her constructive ability, as we have already suggested, is either not very remarkable, or has never been properly brought into play; in truth, her genius is too impetuous for the minuter technicalities of that elaborate *Art* so needful in the building up of pyramids for immortality. This deficiency, then — if there be any such — is her chief weakness. Her other foibles, although some of them are, in fact, glaring, glare, nevertheless, to no very material ill purpose. There are none which she will not readily dismiss in her future works. She retains them now, perhaps, because unaware of their existence.

Her affectations are unquestionably many, and generally inexcusable. We may, perhaps, tolerate such words as "blé," "chrysm," "nympholeptic," "œnomel," and "chrysopras" — they have at least the merit either of distinct meaning, or of terse and sonorous expression; but what can be well said in defence of the unnecessary nonsense of "'ware" for "aware" — of "'bide," for "abide" — of "'gins," for "begins" — of "'las" for "alas" — of "oftly," "ofter," and "oftest," for "often," "more often," and "most often" — or of "erelong" in the sense of "long ago"? That there is *authority* for the mere words proves nothing;

those who employed them in their day would not employ them if writing now. Although we grant, too, that the poetess is very usually Homeric in her compounds, there is no intelligibility of construction, and therefore no force of meaning in "dew-pallid," "pale-passioned," and "silver-solemn." Neither have we any partiality for "drave" or "súpreme," or "lá-ment"; and while upon this topic, we may as well observe that there are few readers who do anything but laugh or stare at such phrases as "L. E. L.'s Last Question," "The Cry of the Human," "Leaning from my Human," "Heaven assist the human," "the full sense of your mortal," "a grave for your divine," "falling off from our created," "he sends this gage for thy pity's counting," "they could not press their futures on the present of her courtesy," or "could another fairer lack to thee, lack to thee?" There are few, at the same time, who do not feel disposed to weep outright, when they hear of such things as "Hope withdrawing her peradventure," "spirits dealing in pathos of antithesis," "angels in antagonism to God and his reflex beatitudes," "songs of glories ruffling down doorways," "God's possibles," and "rules of Mandom."

We have already said, however, that mere *quaintness* within reasonable limit is not only not to be regarded as affectation, but has its proper artistic uses in aiding a fantastic effect. We quote, from the lines "To Flush, my Dog," a passage in exemplification:

> "Leap! thy broad tail waves a light;
> Leap! thy slender feet are bright,
> Canopied in fringes.
> Leap — those tasselled ears of thine
> Flicker strangely, fair and fine,
> *Down their golden inches!*"

And again — from the song of a tree-spirit, in the "Drama of Exile": —

> "Which divine impulsion cleaves
> In dim movements to the leaves
> *Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted*
> In the sunlight greenly sifted, —
> *In the sunlight and the moonlight*
> *Greenly sifted through the trees.*
> Ever wave the Eden trees,
> *In the nightlight and the noonlight,*
> With a ruffling of green branches
> *Shaded off to resonances;*
> Never stirred by rain or breeze."

The thoughts, here, belong to the highest order of poetry, but they could not have been wrought into effective expression, without the instrumentality of those repetitions — those unusual phrases — in a word, those *quaintnesses*, which it has been too long the fashion to censure, indiscriminately, under the one general head of "affectation." No true poet will fail to be enraptured with the two extracts above quoted — but we believe there are few who would not find a difficulty in reconciling the psychal impossibility of refraining from admiration with the too-hastily attained mental conviction that, critically, there is nothing to admire.

Occasionally, we meet in Miss Barrett's poems a certain far-fetchedness of imagery, which is reprehensible in the extreme. What, for example, are we to think of

> "Now he hears the angels' voices
> Folding silence in the room?" —

undoubtedly, that it is nonsense, and no more; or of

> "How the silence round you shivers
> While our voices through it go?" —

again, unquestionably, that it is nonsense, and nothing beyond.

Sometimes we are startled by knotty paradoxes; and it is not acquitting their perpetrator of all blame on their account to admit that, in some instances, they are susceptible of solution. It is really difficult to discover anything for approbation, in enigmas such as

"That bright impassive, passive angel-hood,"

or,

"The silence of my heart is full of sound."

At long intervals, we are annoyed by specimens of repulsive imagery, as where the children cry;

"How long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, *on a child's heart* —
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation?" etc.

Now and then, too, we are confounded by a pure platitude, as when Eve exclaims: —

"Leave us not
In agony beyond what we can bear,
And in debasement *below thunder-mark!*"

or, when the Saviour is made to say: —

"So, at last,
He shall look round on you *with lids too straight*
To hold the grateful tears."

"Strait" was, no doubt, intended, but does not materially elevate, although it slightly elucidates, the thought. A very remarkable passage is that, also, wherein Eve bids the infant voices

"Hear the steep generations, how they fall
Adown the visionary stairs of Time,
Like supernatural thunders — far, yet near —
Sowing their fiery echoes through the hills!"

Here, saying nothing of the affectation in "adown;" not alluding to the insoluble paradox of "far yet near;" not mentioning the inconsistent metaphor involved in the "sowing of *fiery* echoes;" adverting but slightly to the misusage of "like," in place of "as," and to the impropriety of making anything fall like *thunder*, which has never been known to fall at all; merely hinting, too, at the misapplication of "steep" to the "generations," instead of to the "stairs" — a perversion in no degree to be justified by the fact that so preposterous a figure as *synecdoche* exists in the school-books; — letting these things pass, for the present, we shall still find it difficult to understand how Miss Barrett should have been led to think that the principal idea itself — the abstract idea — the idea of *tumbling downstairs*, in any shape, or under any circumstances — either a poetical or a decorous conception. And yet we have seen this very passage quoted as "sublime" by a critic who seems to take it for granted, as a general rule, that Nat-Leeism is the loftiest order of literary merit. That the lines very *narrowly missed* sublimity, we grant; that they came within a step of it, we admit; but, unhappily, the step is that *one* step which, time out of mind, has intervened between the sublime and the ridiculous. So true is this, that any person — that even *we* — with a very partial modification of the imagery, a modification that shall not interfere with its richly spiritual *tone*, may elevate the quotation into unexceptionability. For example: and we offer it with profound deference —

> Hear the far generations — how they crash,
> From crag to crag, down the precipitous Time,
> In multitudinous thunders that upstartle,

Aghast, the echoes from their cavernous lairs
In the visionary hills!

We have no doubt that our version has its faults — but it has, at least, the merit of consistency. Not only is a mountain more poetical than a pair of stairs, but echoes are more appropriately typified as wild beasts than as seeds; and echoes and wild beasts agree better with a mountain than does a pair of stairs with the *sowing* of seeds — even admitting that these seeds be seeds of fire, and be sown broadcast "among the hills," by a steep generation, while in the act of tumbling down the stairs — that is to say, of coming down the stairs — in too violent a hurry to be capable of sowing the seeds as accurately as all seeds should be sown; nor is the matter rendered any better for Miss Barrett, even if the construction of her sentence is to be understood as implying that the fiery seeds were sown, not immediately by the steep generations that tumbled down the stairs, but mediately, through the intervention of the "supernatural thunders" that were *occasioned* by the "steep generations" that tumbled down the stairs.

The poetess is not unfrequently guilty of repeating herself. The "thunder cloud veined by the lightning" appears, for instance, on pages 34 of the first, and 228 of the second volume. The "silver clash of wings" is heard at pages 53 of the first, and 269 of the second; and angel tears are discovered to be falling as well at page 27 as at the conclusion of the "Drama of Exile." Steam, too, in the shape of Death's White Horse, comes upon the ground, both at page 244 of the first, and 179 of the second volume, and there are multitudinous other repetitions, both of phrase and idea; but it is the excessive reiteration of pet *words*

which is, perhaps, the most obtrusive of the minor errors of the poet. "Chrystalline," "Apocalypse," "foregone," "evangel," "'ware," "throb," "level," "loss," and the musical term "minor," are forever upon her lips. The chief favorites, however, are "down" and "leaning," which are echoed and re-echoed not only *ad infinitum*, but in every whimsical variation of import. As Miss Barrett certainly cannot be aware of the extent of this mannerism, we will venture to call her attention to a few — comparatively a *very* few examples: —

"Pealing *down* the depths of Godhead."
"Smiling *down*, as Venus *down* the waves."
"Smiling *down* the steep world very purely."
"*Down* the purple of this chamber."
"Moving *down* the hidden depths of loving."
"Cold the sun shines *down* the door."
"Which brought angels *down* our talk."
"Let your souls behind you *lean* gently moved."
"But angels *leaning* from the golden seat."
"And melancholy *leaning* out of heaven."
"And I know the heavens are *leaning* down."
"Then over the casement she *leaneth*."
"Forbear that dream, too near to heaven it *leaned*."
"I would *lean* my spirit o'er you."
"Thou, O sapient angel, *leanest o'er*."
"Shapes of brightness *overlean* thee."
"They are *leaning* their young heads."
"Out of heaven shall o'er you *lean*."
"While my spirit *leans* and reaches."
etc., etc., etc.

In the matter of grammar, upon which the Edinburgh critic insists so pertinaciously, the author of

the "Drama of Exile" seems to us even peculiarly without fault. The nature of her studies has, no doubt, imbued her with a very delicate instinct of constructive accuracy. The occasional use of phrases so questionable as "from whence," and the far-fetchedness and involution of which we have already spoken, are the only noticeable blemishes of an exceedingly chaste, vigorous, and comprehensive style.

In her inattention to rhythm, Miss Barrett is guilty of an error that might have been fatal to her fame — that *would* have been fatal to any reputation less solidly founded than her own. We do not allude, so particularly, to her multiplicity of inadmissible rhymes. We would wish, to be sure, that she had not thought proper to couple Eden and succeeding, glories and floorwise, burning and morning, thither and æther, enclose me and across me, misdoers and flowers, centre and winter, guerdon and pardon, conquer and anchor, desert and unmeasured, atoms and fathoms, opal and people, glory and doorway, trumpet and accompted, taming and overcame him, coming and woman, is and trees, off and sun-proof, eagles and vigils, nature and satire, poems and interflowings, certes and virtues, pardon and burden, thereat and great, children and bewildering, mortal and turtle, moonshine and sunshine. It would have been better, we say, if such apologies for rhymes as these had been rejected. But deficiencies of rhythm are more serious. In some cases it is nearly impossible to determine what metre is intended. "The Cry of the Children" cannot be scanned: we *never saw* so poor a specimen of verse. In imitating the rhythm of "Locksley Hall," the poetess has preserved with accuracy (so far as mere syllables are concerned) the forcible line of seven

trochees with a final cæsura. The "double rhymes" have only the force of a single long syllable, a cæsura; but the natural rhythmical division, occurring at the close of the fourth trochee, should never be forced to occur, as Miss Barrett constantly forces it, in the middle of a word, or of an indivisible phrase. If it do so occur, we must sacrifice, in perusal, either the sense or the rhythm. If she will consider, too, that this line of seven trochees and a cæsura is nothing more than two lines written in one — a line of four trochees, succeeded by one of three trochees and a cæsura — she will at once see how unwise she has been in composing her poem in quatrains of the long line with alternate rhymes, instead of immediate ones, as in the case of "Locksley Hall." The result is, that the ear, expecting the rhymes before they occur, does not appreciate them when they do. These points, however, will be best exemplified by transcribing one of the quatrains in its *natural* arrangement. That actually employed is addressed only to the eye.

"Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird
In among its forest-brothers
Far too strong for it! then, drooping,
Bowed her face upon her hands —
And I spake out wildly, fiercely,
Brutal truths of her and others!
I, she planted in the desert,
Swathed her, wind-like, with my sands!"

Here it will be seen that there is a paucity of rhyme, and that it is expected at closes where it does not occur. In fact, if we consider the eight lines as two independent quatrains (which they are), then we find them *entirely rhymeless*. Now so unhappy are these metrical defects, of so much importance do we take

them to be, that we do not hesitate in declaring the general inferiority of the poem to its prototype to be altogether chargeable to *them*. With equal rhythm "Lady Geraldine" had been far, very far the superior poem. Inefficient rhythm is inefficient poetical expression; and expression, in poetry, — what is it? — what is it not? No one living can better answer these queries than Miss Barrett.

We conclude our comments upon her versification by quoting (we will not say whence — from what one of her poems) a few verses without the linear division as it appears in the book. There are many readers who would never suspect the passage to be intended for metre at all. — "Ay! — and sometimes, on the hillside, while we sat down in the gowans, with the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before; and the river running under; and, across it, from the rowans, a brown partridge whirring near us, till we felt the air it bore — there, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems made to Tuscan flutes, or instruments, more various, of our own — read the pastoral parts of Spenser — or the subtle interflowings found in Petrarch's sonnets — here 's the book — the leaf is folded down!"

With this extract we make an end of our fault-finding — and now, shall we speak, equally in detail, of the *beauties* of this book? Alas! here, indeed, do we feel the impotence of the pen. We have already said that the supreme excellence of the poetess whose works we review is made up of the multitudinous sums of a world of lofty merits. It is the multiplicity, it is the *aggregation*, which excites our most profound enthusiasm, and enforces our most earnest respect. But unless we had space to extract three-fourths of the volumes, how could we convey this aggregation

by specimens? We might quote, to be sure, an example of keen insight into our psychal nature, such as this: —

"I fell flooded with a Dark,
In the silence of a swoon —
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night, — I saw the moon;
And the stars, each in its place,
And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.
And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand —
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand, —
Somewhat coldly, — with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence."

Or we might copy an instance of the purest and most radiant imagination, such as this: —

"So, young muser, I sat listening
To my Fancy's wildest word —
On a sudden, through the glistening
Leaves around, a little stirred,
Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather felt than heard.

"Softly, finely, it inwound me —
From the world it shut me in, —
Like a fountain falling round me
Which with silver waters thin
Clips a little water Naiad, sitting smilingly within."

Or, again, we might extract a specimen of wild Dantesque vigor, such as this, in combination with a pathos never excelled: —

"Ay! be silent — let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth —
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!

"Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals —
Let them prove their inward souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!"

Or, still again, we might give a passage embodying the most elevated sentiment, most tersely and musically thus expressed: —

"And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and rare,
And true to truth and brave for truth, as some at Augsburg were, —
We charge thee, by thy lofty thoughts, and by thy poet-mind
Which not and glory or degree takes measure of mankind,
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing!"

These passages, we say, and a hundred similar ones, exemplifying particular excellences, might be displayed, and we should still fail, as lamentably as the σχολαστικός with his brick, in conveying an idea of the vast *totality*. By no individual stars can we present the constellatory radiance of the book. *To the book*, then, with implicit confidence we appeal.

That Miss Barrett has done more, in poetry, than any woman, living or dead, will scarcely be questioned: — that she has surpassed all her poetical contemporaries of either sex (with a single exception) is our deliberate opinion — not idly entertained, we think, nor founded on any visionary basis. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, in closing this examination of her claims, to determine in what manner she holds poetical relation with these contemporaries, or with her immediate predecessors, and especially with the great exception to which we have alluded, — if at all.

If ever mortal "wreaked his thoughts upon expression," it was Shelley. If ever poet sang (as a bird sings) impulsively, earnestly, with utter abandonment, to himself solely, and for the mere joy of his own song, that poet was the author of the "Sensitive Plant." Of art — beyond that which is the inalienable instinct of genius — he either had little or disdained all. He really disdained that Rule which is the emanation from Law, because his own soul was law in itself. His rhapsodies are but the rough notes, the stenographic memoranda of poems, — memoranda which, because they were all-sufficient for his own intelligence, he cared not to be at the trouble of transcribing in full for mankind. In his whole life he wrought not thoroughly out a single conception. For this reason it is that he is the most fatiguing of poets. Yet he wearies in having done too little, rather than too much; what seems in him the diffuseness of one idea, is the conglomerate concision of many; and this concision it is which renders him obscure. With such a man, to imitate was out of the question; it would have answered no purpose — for he spoke to his own spirit alone, which would have comprehended no alien tongue; — he was, therefore, profoundly original. His quaintness arose from intuitive perception of that truth to which Lord Verulam alone has given distinct voice: — "There is no exquisite beauty which has not some strangeness in its proportion." But whether obscure, original, or quaint, he was at all times sincere. He had no *affectations*.

From the ruins of Shelley there sprang into existence, affronting the Heavens, a tottering and fantastic pagoda, in which the salient angles, tipped with mad jangling bells, were the idiosyncratic *faults* of

the great original — faults which cannot be called such in view of his purposes, but which are monstrous when we regard his works as addressed to mankind. A "school" arose, if that absurd term must still be employed, — a school, a system of rules, upon the basis of the Shelley who had none. Young men innumerable, dazzled with the glare and bewildered with the bizarrerie of the divine lightning that flickered through the clouds of the "Prometheus," had no trouble whatever in heaping up imitative vapors; but, for the lightning, were content, perforce, with its spectrum, in which the bizarrerie appeared without the fire. Nor were great and mature minds unimpressed by the contemplation of a greater and more mature; and thus gradually were interwoven into this school of all Lawlessness — of obscurity, quaintness, exaggeration — the misplaced didacticism of Wordsworth and the even more preposterously anomalous metaphysicianism of Coleridge. Matters were now fast verging to their worst, and at length, in Tennyson, poetic inconsistency attained its extreme. But it was precisely this extreme (for the greatest error and the greatest truth are scarcely two points in a circle), it was this extreme which, following the law of all extremes, wrought in him — in Tennyson — a natural and inevitable revulsion, leading him first to contemn and secondly to investigate his early manner, and, finally, to winnow from its magnificent elements the truest and purest of all poetical styles. But not even yet is the process complete; and for this reason in part, but chiefly on account of the mere fortuitousness of that mental and moral combination which shall unite in one person (if *ever* it shall) the Shelleyan abandon, the Tennysonian poetic sense, the most pro-

found instinct of Art, and the sternest Will properly to blend and vigorously to control all; — chiefly, we say, because such combination of antagonisms must be purely fortuitous, has the world never yet seen the noblest of the poems of which it is *possible* that it may be put in possession.

And yet Miss Barrett has narrowly missed the fulfilment of these conditions. Her poetic inspiration is the highest — we can conceive nothing more august. Her sense of art is pure in itself, but has been contaminated by pedantic study of false models — a study which has the more easily led her astray, because she placed an undue value upon it as rare, as alien to her character of woman. The accident of having been long secluded by ill health from the world has effected, moreover, in her behalf, what an innate recklessness did for Shelley — has imparted to her, if not precisely that abandon to which I have referred, at least a something that stands well in its stead, a comparative independence of men and opinions with which she did not come personally in contact, a happy audacity of thought and expression never before known in one of her sex. It is, however, this same accident of ill health, perhaps, which has invalidated her original Will, diverted her from proper individuality of purpose, and seduced her into the sin of imitation. Thus, what she might have done, we cannot altogether determine. What she has actually accomplished is before us. With Tennyson's works beside her, and a keen appreciation of them in her soul — appreciation too keen to be discriminative; — with an imagination even more vigorous than his, although somewhat less ethereally delicate; with inferior art and more feeble volition; she has written poems

such as he *could not write*, but such as he, under *her* conditions of ill health and seclusion, *would have written* during the epoch of his pupildom in that school which arose out of Shelley, and from which, over a disgustful gulf of utter incongruity and absurdity lit only by miasmatic flashes, into the broad open meadows of Natural Art and Divine Genius, he — Tennyson — is at once the bridge and the transition.

NOTES

NOTES

ON POETRY AND THE POETS

THE Poetic Principle. Published in "Sartain's Union Magazine," October, 1850. The paper represents the lecture of the same title which Poe was accustomed to deliver, partly as an elocutionary performance. The critical portion is made up of reviews previously published. The most striking passage — that on poetic theory — is from the notice of Longfellow's "Ballads," "Graham's Magazine," April, 1842, and should be read in connection with the remainder of that review, below.

The Philosophy of Composition. Published in "Graham's Magazine," April, 1846. See NOTE on "The Raven," vol. x.

The Rationale of Verse. Published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," October, November, 1848. The first form of the paper appeared as "Notes on English Verse" in the "Pioneer," March, 1843. Such portions of the earlier paper as were omitted in the revision are elsewhere substantially incorporated in the collected writings, except an analysis of the versification of Holmes's "Last Leaf," used only for illustrative purposes, and hence the Editors follow Poe in excluding it here. An unsigned review of Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America," in the "Saturday Museum," 1843, reprinted in the NOTES to Gill's "Life of Poe," also contains some paragraphs on versification, of the nature of earlier studies

for "The Rationale of Verse." The latter, however, is the final form of what Poe had to say on the whole subject; and, together with some paragraphs of the "Marginalia," amply expresses his mind with regard to it.

William Cullen Bryant. Published in "Godey's Lady's Book," April, 1846. Bryant had been briefly reviewed in the "Southern Literary Messenger," January, 1835, and, more at length, in the same magazine, January, 1837, and also in "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," May, 1840.

Longfellow's "Ballads." Published in "Graham's Magazine," March, April, 1842. Text follows Griswold. See NOTE on "The Poetic Principle," above, and also the following.

A Reply to Outis. Published in the "Broadway Journal," i. 10–14. This paper, which is the only literary survival of what was known at the time as "The Longfellow War," is self-explanatory, but hardly does justice to Poe's appreciation of Longfellow, which was high and just, except in so far as his judgment was unduly affected by what he considered Longfellow's imitative plagiarism, and his temper soured by the unequal controversy. Poe reviewed the "Voices of the Night" in "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," February, 1840, and wound up what was an excellent notice by putting side by side the "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year," and Tennyson's "Death of the Old Year," — the passage that reappears in the "Reply to Outis," pp. 182–185. He repeatedly gave Longfellow the first place among American poets, or wavered only in favor of Lowell, as in the first notice of the "Ballads," March, 1842, which concluded as follows: —

"There is a young American who, with ideality not richer than that of Longfellow, and with less artistical knowledge, has yet composed far truer poems, merely through the greater propriety of his themes. We allude to James Russell Lowell; and in the number of this Magazine for last month will be found a ballad entitled 'Rosaline,' affording an excellent exemplification of our

meaning. This composition has unquestionably its defects, and the very defects which are never perceptible in Mr. Longfellow — but we sincerely think that *no American poem equals it* in the higher elements of song."

Poe returned to the criticism of Longfellow in the "Evening Mirror," Jan. 14, 1845, with the notice of Longfellow's "Waif" reprinted in the opening of the "Reply to Outis." An epistolary and editorial discussion followed in the columns of the "Mirror," in which Poe was left to bear the brunt of the protests his words had evoked; Willis, the editor-in-chief, ostentatiously stated his dissent from "all the disparagement of Longfellow," and also admitted to the "Mirror" the long letter signed "Outis" at the very moment when Poe was leaving the paper to become joint-editor of the "Broadway Journal." In this latter the "Reply" appeared. Longfellow took no notice of the charges except so far as regards the alleged plagiarism from Motherwell, pp. 186, 187, which he had seen in some newspaper during the first month of the controversy. The following letter from him to the Editor of "Graham's Magazine" was published in the number for May, 1845.

CAMBRIDGE, February 19, 1845.

DEAR SIR, — Perhaps you may remember that, a year or two ago, I published in your Magazine a translation from the German of O. L. B. Wolf, entitled "The Good George Campbell." Within a few days I have seen a paragraph in a newspaper, asserting, in very discourteous language, that this was not a translation from the German, but a plagiarism from a Scotch ballad published in Motherwell's "Minstrelsy." My object in writing you is to deny this charge, and to show that the poem I sent you is what it pretended to be.

As I was passing up the Rhine, in the summer of 1842, a gentleman with whom I had become acquainted on board the steamer put into my hands a collection of German poems, entitled *Deutscher Sänger-Saal*, edited by Gollmich. In this collection I found "The Good George Campbell." It there appeared as an original poem by Wolf, and I was so much struck with its simplicity and beauty

that I immediately wrote a translation of it, with a pencil, in my pocket-book; and the same evening, at Mayence, made a copy of the German, which I enclose.

Soon after my return to this country my version was published in your Magazine. At that time I had not the slightest suspicion that the German poem was itself a translation, nor was I aware of the fact till Mr. Griswold, then one of the Editors of the Magazine, wrote to me upon the subject, and sent me a copy of the Scotch ballad from which he supposed the German poem to have been taken. I had never before seen it, and I could not but smile at my own ignorance, which had thus led me to re-translate a translation. I immediately answered Mr. Griswold's note, but as he did not publish my answer, I thought no more of the matter.

My attention being again called to the subject by the paragraph alluded to above, and the ballad from Motherwell's Collection, which was printed with it, and which I do not remember to have seen before, I turned to Mr. Griswold's letter, and found that his version of the poem differed very materially from Motherwell's, and seemed to be but a fragment of some longer ballad. It is as follows: —

HAME NEVER CAME HE

Saddled and bridled and booted rode he,
A plume at his helmet, a sword at his knee;
But torn cam' the saddle, all bluidy to see,
And hame cam' the steed, but hame never cam' he.

Down cam' his gray father, sabbin' sae sair,
Down cam' his auld mither, tearin' her hair,
Down cam' his sweet wife, wie bonnie bairns three,
Ane at her bosom an' twa at her knee.

There stood the fleet steed, all foamin' an' hot,
There shrieked his sweet wife, an' sank on the spot;
There stood his gray father, weepin' sae free, —
Sae hame cam' his steed, but hame never cam' he.

Having with some difficulty procured a copy of Motherwell's "Minstrelsy," I find the following note prefixed to the ballad. "Bonnie George Campbell is probably a lament for one of the adherents of the house of Argyle, who fell in the battle of Glenlievat, stricken on Thursday, the third day of October, 1594 years.

(*Gordon's Earldom of Sutherland.*) Of this ballad Mr. Finlay had only recovered three stanzas, which he has given in the preface to his 'Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads,' page 33, introduced by the following remarks — 'There is another fragment still remaining, which appears to have belonged to a ballad of adventure, perhaps of real history. I am acquainted with no poem, of which the lines, as they stand, can be supposed to have formed a part.' The words and the music of this Lament are published in the fifth volume of the 'Scottish Minstrelsy.'" The other "fragment still remaining" is probably the poem sent me by Mr. Griswold.

Since I have seen the Scotch ballad in Motherwell I have detected, by means of it, a misprint in the German poem. The last word of the second line is *Tag* (day) instead of *Tay*, the name of the river. I translated the word as it stood, and thus the accidental misprint of a single letter has become an unimpeachable witness of the falsity of the charge brought against me.

Will you have the goodness to publish this letter and the several versions of the poem enclosed?

Yours truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

MOTHERWELL

Hie upon Hielands,
And low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
Rade out on a day.
Saddled and bridled
And gallant rade he;
Hame cam his gude horse,
But never cam he.

Out cam his auld mither,
Greetin' fu' sair,
And out cam his bonnie bride,
Rivin' her hair.
Saddled and bridled
And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
But never cam he.

"My meadow lies green
  And my corn is unshorn;
My barn is too big,
  And my baby's unborn."
Saddled and bridled
  And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
  But never cam he.

DER GUTE GEORGE CAMPBELL

WOLF

Hoch auf dem Hochland,
  Und tief an dem Tag,
Der gute George Campbell
  Ritt eines Tags frei.
Gesattelt, gezäumt,
  Und geschmückt ritt er,
Heim kam sein gutes Ross,
  Doch er nimmermehr.

Hinaus trat die Mutter,
  Weinend so sehr;
Hinaus die schöne Braut
  Klagend so schwer.
Gesattelt, gezäumt,
  Und gestiefelt ritt er,
Heim kam der Sattel,
  Doch er nimmermehr.

"Meine Wiese liegt grün,
  Und mein Korn ungeschoren,
Meine Scheune ist leer,
  Und mein Kind ungeboren."
Gesattelt, gezäumt,
  Und gestiefelt ritt er,
Zurück kam der Sattel,
  Doch er selbst nimmermehr.

THE GOOD GEORGE CAMPBELL

LONGFELLOW

High on the Highlands,
And deep in the day,
The good George Campbell
Rode free and away.
All saddled, all bridled,
Gay garments he wore;
Home came his good steed,
But he nevermore.

Out came his mother,
Weeping so sadly;
Out came his beauteous bride,
Weeping so madly.
All saddled, all bridled,
Strong armor he wore;
Home came the saddle,
But he nevermore.

"My meadow lies green,
Unreaped is my corn;
My garner is empty,
My child is unborn."
All saddled, all bridled,
Sharp weapons he bore;
Home came the saddle,
But he nevermore.

There is no question but that Poe felt personally aggrieved, and was convinced that Longfellow had been indebted to his own uncollected and fugitive poems for suggestions, phrases, and ideas. Before he wrote upon Longfellow's verse at all, he believed that the poem of "The Beleaguered City" was imitated from his own "Haunted Palace," and he repeatedly brought the charge. In view of the extraordinary sensitiveness of Poe to such injury, real or imagined, and also of the fact of the great advantage of Longfellow in position, ease of publication, and a popularity for which the way was made smooth from

the first, it is rather to be wondered at that Poe was, in general, so appreciative and ready to acknowledge his rival's excellence than that he showed a bitter spirit upon this one matter. It was his habit to endeavor to win to his acquaintance and literary friendship all men of distinction or of promise; he wished to be recognized by them as he gave recognition to them; and he had made no exception of Longfellow, who, however, unlike the others, seems never to have responded in any way to such advances.

The American Drama. Published in the "American Whig Review," August, 1845. Willis's "Tortesa" had been briefly noticed in "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," August, 1839.

Lowell's "A Fable for Critics." Published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," February, 1849. Poe had previously reviewed Lowell's poems in "Graham's Magazine," March, 1844, and had then promised a longer notice, which was never written. The present paper is an unfavorable example of his critical attitude toward Lowell. There had been a pleasant acquaintance, by correspondence, between them, and Poe's appreciation of Lowell had overshot the mark instead of falling short. He had the same sort of enthusiastic praise and prophecy for him as for Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, and Horne; but the course of events was untoward, and the friendly feeling between them was entirely destroyed. The correspondence, on both sides, has been published by the present writer, "Life of Poe," 1885, and "Scribner's Magazine," August, 1894. See, also, NOTE on "A Reply to Outis" above.

Moore's "Alciphron." Published in "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine," January, 1840. So much of the paper as relates to Drake and to the theory of the fancy and imagination is reproduced from the review of Drake and Halleck in the "Southern Literary Messenger," April, 1836.

In this earlier paper a theory of poetry is set forth, cruder than that in the notice of Longfellow's "Ballads," but along similar lines; it was not reprinted by Poe, even in the "Marginalia," and must be regarded as suppressed by him in favor of the later and more definitely expressed statement of his views.

Horne's "Orion." Published in "Graham's Magazine," March, 1844. Horne revised the poem with some attention to Poe's suggestions.

Miss Barrett's "A Drama of Exile." Published in the "Broadway Journal," i. 1–2. Poe had previously written, fragmentarily, on Mrs. Browning (then Miss Barrett) during the fall of 1844, in the "Evening Mirror."

G. E. W.

END OF VOL. VI.

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